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Xiticix Invasion™

Rifts® World Book 23

By Kevin Siembieda



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— Kevin Siembieda, 1999

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The cover is artist, *Dave Dorman's*, interpretation of Xiticix Warriors defending an egg-bloated, Elder Queen inside her chamber.

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— *Kevin Siembieda, 1999*

Content

The shape of things to come	7	Xiticix Weapons	77
Xiticix: An Overview	8	Xiticix Spear	79
The Devouring Horde	9	Resin Spike Gun	81
Xiticix wars against other life forms	10	Resin Spitter	82
Challenges	11	Prelude to War	85
Travelers through a Hive Network	11	The Coalition States	85
Food	11	New & Reformulated Data on the Xiticix	85
Hive Cities	12	Xiticix Killer	88
Defenses	12	Lazlo's War	92
Typical Tower & M.D.C.	14	Lazlo's Plan A	94
Other Defenses of the Hive	14	Lazlo's Plan B	95
Scent Identification	16	The opposing view	95
Xiticix Instincts, Combat & Tactics	17	Possible Allies	95
Growth & Life Cycle of the Xiticix	20	Consequences & Issues of Concern	97
Xiticix Young	20	Psi-Stalkers — A Private War	100
Sludge	21	The Spider Tribe	101
Life Span & Growth of the Colony	22	Pony-Tail Tribe	103
Life on the Xiticix Homeworld	23	Deathbringer Warriors	104
The Xiticix Hives	25	Quiwan Li, Necromancer	105
Map of Xiticix Territory & Surrounding Areas	27	Brok Magnil, Evil Necromancer	107
Typical Xiticix Tower	29	Psi-Stalker R.C.C.	108
Typical Xiticix Tunnel Network	30	Special Powers & Abilities	109
Xiticix	36	Coalition Psi-Stalker	110
Special Powers & Abilities	36	Wild Psi-Stalker	111
Antennae	36	Northern Tribes	112
Xiticix Chemical Abilities	38	Adventures	114
Sludge (described)	41	Lazlo vs the Xiticix	118
Limited Powers of Regeneration	41	Typical Breakdown of Lazlo Troops	118
Other Physical Features of Note	43	Plan of Attack	120
Larva Stage Xiticix	43	The start of the War	121
Nits	43	Military Raids	121
Grubs	44	Rescue Missions	122
Adult Xiticix R.C.C.s	45	More Hook, Line & Sinker™ Adventures	123
Xiticix Hierarchy	45	The Legacy of the Xiticix Fighter	126
Typical Xiticix Colony's Population	45	A Hiveland Adventure	127
Fighting Classes of Xiticix	45	The Results	133
Alphabetical Listing	45	Hiveland Dramatis Personae	133
Xiticix Digger	45	CS Strike Force Durango	136
Abilities Unique to Diggers	49	CS Operations in Xiticix Territory	141
M.D.C. Bonding Resin	49	CS Special Ops	141
Xiticix Hunter	52	Hearts & Minds	141
Marking Targets	53	Fort Barron	143
Abilities Unique to Hunters	55	Troop Breakdown	143
Xiticix Leaper	55	Notable Weapons & Vehicle Consignment	143
Abilities Unique to Leapers	58	Major Samuel Haim	144
Xiticix Nanny	59	Orion Greenfeld	145
Abilities Unique to Nannies	61	Layout of Fort Barron	147
The Xiticix Queens	61	Surface Level	147
Young Queens	61	Underground Level	148
Elder Queen	64	Fort Perrion	152
Xiticix Warrior	66	Heroes & Hardcases (NPCs)	153
Abilities Unique to the Warrior	68	The Wild Pack	153
Xiticix Super-Warrior	70	Manitoba & Company	155
Abilities Unique to the Super-Warrior	72	The Lazlo Triad	159
Xiticix Worker	74		

Quick Find

Buzzed by a lone Warrior	11
Clamp and Destroy Strategy	16
CS Commander Jess Helgeland	153
CS Commando (Typical)	137
CS Data	85
CS Elite RPA Pilot (Typical)	137
CS Forts	143
CS Fort Barron	143
CS Fort Perrion	152
CS Lieutenant Thomas Kent	136
CS Major Haim	144
CS Operations	141
CS Plan A	86
CS Plan B	87
CS Response to empty hives	99
CS Scout, Orion Greenfeld	145
CS Strike Force Durango	136
CS Wild Pack	153
CS Power Armor & Robots Vehicles (condensed)	138
CS Xiticix Killer	88
Cyber-Knights	98
Elder Queen (stats)	64
Elder Queen: Growth of the Colony	22
Free Thinkers (Hivelands Adventure)	127
Free Thinker: Cristobal	134
Free Thinker: Copeland	135
Free Thinker: Illyana	134
Free Thinker: Summers	135
Free Thinker: Raskin	133
Fungus (Xiticix Food)	11
Growth Acceleration: Sludge	11
Leaper Poison	58
Insect Powers & Abilities	36
Identification Scent	40
Notable NPC: Brok Magnil (evil Necromancer)	107
Notable NPC: Free Thinkers	133
Notable NPC: Corp. Chase (Dog Boy)	154
Notable NPC: Corp. Chesterfield (Dog Boy)	154
Notable NPC: Lazlo Triad	159
Notable NPC: Lieutenant Thomas Kent (CS)	136
Notable NPC: Major Samuel Haim (CS)	144
Notable NPC: Necromancers (in General)	107
Notable NPC: Omicron (Ley Line Walker)	160
Notable NPC: Orion Greenfeld (CS Scout)	145
Notable NPC: Quiwan Li (Necromancer)	105
Notable NPC: Sgt. Samuel (Dog Boy)	154
Notable NPC: Serian Skeld (Fire Dragon)	159
Notable NPC: Sir Jericho Camlann (knight)	159
Notable NPC: Wild Pack	153
Queen Check (Lazlo's Plan A)	94
Resin	49
Scent Gland Disguise	11 & 40
Sludge	21
Sludge: Full description	41
Splugorth	97
Tower: Defenses	14
Tower: Inside	19

Tower: M.D.C.	14
Tower: Typical Layout	29
Tundra Rangers	97
Tunnel Network: Typical Layout	30
Tunnel Map/Floor Plan	32
Villain: CS Strike Force Durango	136
Villain: Dekker Trons'stedaal (CS RPA)	158
Villain: Hidechek Gezenske (Burster)	156
Villain: Manitoba & Company	155
Villain: Manitoba Saskatchewan (Groot)	156
Villain: Mighty Cassandra (Juicer)	155
Warrior: S.D.C. Poison	68
Warrior: Special Combat Moves	68
Warrior, Super: Special Combat Moves	72
Xiticix Airspace	11
Xiticix Descriptions Begin	43
Xiticix Food	11
Xiticix Groups (in the City)	10
Xiticix Instincts, Combat & Tactics	17
Xiticix Special Powers & Abilities	36
Xiticix Raiding Swarm	19
Xiticix Response to Travelers	11
Xiticix Squads/Squadrons	18
Xiticix Territory (range)	20
Xiticix Virus (Hivelands Adventure)	128
Xiticix Hive: Geographic Locations & Maps	25
Xiticix Hive: Travelers through a Hive Network	11
Xiticix Hive: Hive City Defenses	12
Xiticix Hive: Tower	29
Xiticix Hive: Tunnel	30

Maps

Manitoba	26
Fort Barron: Surface Level	148
Fort Barron: Underground Level	151
Hive: Big Falls	26
Hive: Crookston	25
Hive: Duluth (Main Hive)	25
Hive: Fargo	25
Hive: Rolla-Morden	26
Hive: Winnipeg	26
Psi-Stalker & Simvan Ranges	112
Tower Cutaway/Layout	29
Tunnel Cutaway/Layout	32
Xiticix Territory (Manitoba, N.D., S.D. MN)	27
Xiticix Territory (all Hives indicated)	35
Xiticix Territory (blank)	26



The shape of things to come ...

The Xiticix are perhaps the best known monsters in the **Rifts® RPG**. They've been around since the game first appeared, with a starring role in the Game Master's section of the basic rule book. However, that entry only gives us a tiny glimpse into their world. It does not provide in-depth information about these strange aliens nor insight into the danger that they represent to all life forms, not just humans or the Coalition States.

It is my hope that this world book helps to take the reader into the "world" of the Xiticix — or at least the microcosm of their world that has appeared on Rifts Earth. To see the inner workings of a truly alien life form that has little in common with humans or most other sentient beings. Furthermore, the Lazlo Kingdom declaring war against the Xiticix will hopefully give many readers new avenues of adventure and campaign ideas they had not previously imagined. A conflict that reveals the humanity, compassion and good intentions of the people of Lazlo during a dark time.

As we focus our attention on North America, it may seem that it has erupted into a war zone, with conflicts appearing everywhere. In the case of **Lazlo** and the **Xiticix**, the war is a matter of survival and saving the lives of millions of Earthlings (humans, D-Bees and others who have come to call Rifts Earth home). For the **Coalition States** and **Tolkeen**, war is a matter of power, revenge and domination. A battle to the finish.

Elsewhere, the growing conflict between **Free Quebec** and the **Coalition States** is born from similar but divergent beliefs, goals and stubborn pride. Two giants angry with one another have committed themselves to a foolish contest to see who is more powerful and who can best the other.

Meanwhile, unknown dangers and dark forces fester and grow. There is the nefarious **Federation of Magic**, the demons of the **Calgary Rift**, and the **Vampire Kingdoms** of Mexico. Outside forces, like the **Splogorth** of Atlantis, The Four Horsemen of Africa, the demons of China and Russia, and the **Mechanoids** also linger as potential menaces. And lurking in the shadows are hidden powers like **A.R.C.H.I.E. Three**, The **Pecos Empire**, **Whykin**, and others, as well as newborn tyrants and power-mongers waiting to flex their muscles and make their moves toward conquest. Some of these hidden dangers will be new arrivals to our world, others have been slowly building their power base or studying the opposition, waiting for the right moment to strike. Among these individuals, gangs, clans, tribes, city-states, kingdoms, armies and fledgling nations are humans, D-Bees, aliens, creatures of magic, and supernatural beings — all searching for their place in the world and/or a piece of power and glory.

In truth, Rifts Earth has been this way since the Great Cataclysm. Over the centuries that followed, the Earth was reshaped. Countless people, gangs, lords and monsters have risen to power and fallen. The **Coalition States**, **Lazlo**, the **Xiticix** and all those noted above (and those who remain hidden or have yet to be born) are just the latest groups vying for dominance. Should one fall, another will rise to take its place. Northern America has been a tinder box for generations, it has taken only one spark to set it ablaze. In this case, that spark was the **Coalition States** declaring war against the **Kingdom of Tolkeen** as part of its move

to conquer and dominate the continent. That spark has polarized the other powers that be, and has forced them to take action to preserve their own positions. Likewise, opportunists from lone individuals to businesses, organizations and kingdoms rush out to either profit from the ensuing wars or to protect their interests.

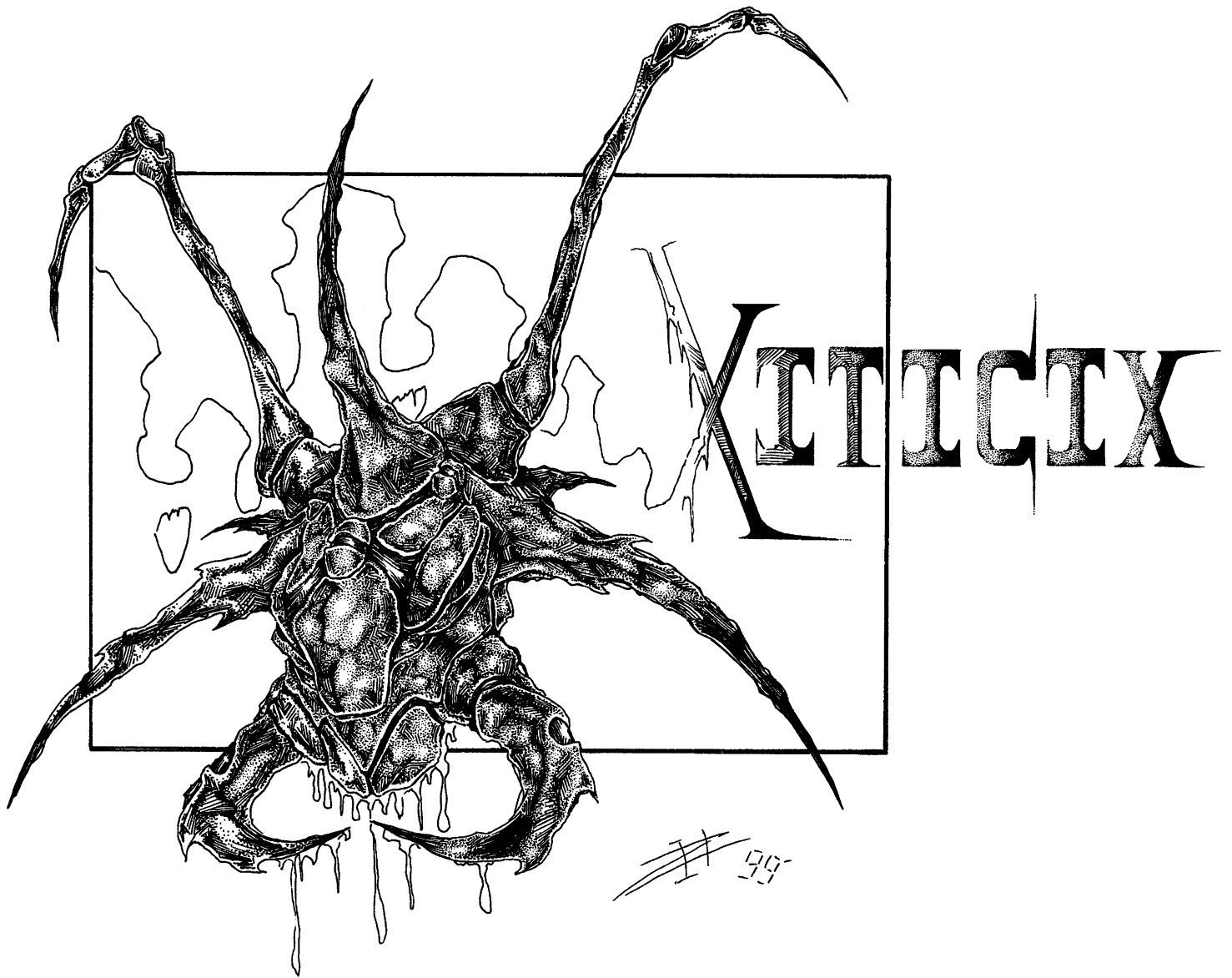
The polarizing effect of the conflict has divided some people (most notably **Free Quebec** from the **CS** and the wedge driven within the **Cyber-Knights** pitting knights against knights), and united others (i.e. **Northern Gun** and the **Manistique Imperium** joining forces with the **CS**). People and communities have chosen sides, drawn the line and prepared to make their stand. Some seek to do what they believe is right. Others seek revenge, and still others seek to only help themselves. The sudden outbreak of other conflicts, rivalries and acts of aggression all grow from the hot flames of war.

The big question is who will be consumed in the coming conflagration? Which leads to a plethora of other questions like: How will all this change the face of the continent? How many will die? Will **Tolkeen** and **Free Quebec** win or lose? How will the **Coalition States** fare from it all? Even if the **CS** wins (as many expect), will the war make them vulnerable to other enemies, like the **Federation of Magic**, or new enemies like the **Calgary demons** or **A.R.C.H.I.E. Three**? What will it mean for other nations if the **CS** falls? Who will take their place? What chain of events will inspire others to rise up and take action? Who else might fall because of the ensuing wars? Already we see **Canada** becoming a more wild and unstable place because of the **Coalition's** wars with **Free Quebec** and **Tolkeen**. Mercenaries, bandits and carpetbaggers flood into the regions around the war zones to exploit opportunities and profit. The war between **Tolkeen** and the **Coalition States** has divided the fabled **Cyber-Knights**, and tens of thousands of people on both sides will soon perish.

While the **CS** (and other rivals and enemies) are distracted with war, the **Federation of Magic** and other forces of evil plot and plan on how they can use the chaos to their benefit. Evil beings are often scavengers, quietly waiting to pick the bones of the deceased to fill their own bellies and line their pockets. Many are masters at exploiting the weaknesses of others to their advantage, so war is always a time of bounty for them.

Thus, the next decade is likely to become even more wild, savage and violent than the one just past. Each force is positioning itself to destroy their rivals, crush their enemies and seize power. *Rifts® Canada*, *Free Quebec™*, *The Xiticix Invasion™* and, to a lesser degree, *Splynn Dimensional Market™*, set the stage for the decade to come and the changing face of the world that is **Rifts®**.

— Kevin Siembieda, 1999



An Overview

By Kevin Siembieda & Wayne Breaux Jr.

If anything sets the Xiticix apart from other beings on Rifts Earth, it is their extremely alien nature and their vast numbers. Some people have likened the insect-aliens to a cancer or a plague because they started in one tiny area and quietly but continually grew and expanded. Their completely alien nature and inhuman mind-set has made them seem all the more frightening and monstrous.

Xiticix do not communicate with other life forms. If they have any genuine understanding of languages and words, they do not show it. If they have any written language, nobody has seen it. Nor do they speak. Still, the Xiticix are highly evolved and intelligent beings. Those who suggest otherwise, tend to think of “intelligence” in terms of their own lives. For example, humans, most D-Bees and even dragons and demons are all creatures who have a strong sense of identity, personal goals, dreams and emotions. They are imaginative and creative beings who are *individuals* that function in a society where they are part of a greater whole; separate but united.

The Xiticix are not like this. They are intelligent and social but in ways very different from humans, or even Splugorth. Xiticix are very much “insects.” They lack much (if any) individuality or personal identity. Their intelligence is tightly intermingled with instinct and their “society” is like those of ants, bees and other hive insects of Earth. Humans tend to think of such creatures as “primitive” or of low intelligence, but it is a formula for success that has served the Earth insects for millions upon millions of years. People seem to forget that insects are an incredibly varied species that represents a life form that has survived world shattering holocausts, mass extinctions, adapted to most every environment imaginable, and thrived on Earth for hundreds of millions of years — much longer than humans or any human ancestor. Insects are one of Earth’s greatest success stories, for it is they who have survived it all and dominate the planet. Thankfully, on Earth (at least until the arrival of the Xiticix), tiny insects and humans have (more or less) managed to coexist.

In many ways, the Xiticix are just another type of “bug.” The difference is they are an “alien” bug as big as a man. They have a vaguely humanoid appearance, and use a small selection of tools. However, even this does not separate the Xiticix greatly from the insect world, for many Earth insects use bits of leaves, stems or twigs as impromptu tools and most insects are prodigious builders. As for their humanoid or bipedal appearance, many members of the Xiticix species look less human than others, and even those who walk and stand on two legs also climb on walls like bugs, run on all sixes, and behave more like insects than humans. Many CS and independent scholars and scientists agree that the Xiticix have much more in common with ants, termites, wasps and bees than most sentient life forms that humans can relate to. Like the insects of Earth, the Xiticix proved to be a highly adaptable and successful life form on their planet of origin. So successful that they came to dominate it, presumably, eliminating even other insect species.

From One, Comes All

The Xiticix live in what humans call Hive Networks. A sprawling city-like complex of constructs that resemble giant concrete mushrooms or an alien city of towers and skyscrapers. Others have likened these Hive Networks to a city of giant termite mounds, although they are more complex with numerous portal-like entrances and exits, ramps and bridges connecting the many towers from the outside, and a tunnel network in the towers and underground. Inside is an infrastructure of chambers, passageways, ramps, tunnels and holes that lead to the various “work stations,” living areas, and chambers of the Xiticix inhabitants. The lower a visitor goes, the more likely he is to encounter the Xiticix denizens who rarely leave the internal confines of the hive, such as nits, grubs, Diggers, Nannies and Queens. The Xiticix can cling to porous surfaces (i.e. material that has a rough to slight texture, as opposed to smooth glass or polished metal) and climb the walls and ceilings of their tunnels and chambers like Earth ants. This means invaders must stay alert for hive defenders dropping off the ceiling or hiding in crevices and holes. Speaking of holes, since these insect beings can climb walls as easily as humans run across flat ground, the Xiticix have no need for stairs and even ramps are at a minimum. This means access from one level or floor to the next is often a hole straight down (i.e. a vertical tunnel). The largest holes are the most frequently used and traveled tunnels, however small vertical tunnels, big enough for one Xiticix Warrior, Hunter or Worker to crawl through are also scattered throughout the Hive Network and enable defenders to gather and swarm at numerous junctions to surround and overwhelm the enemy.

There are roughly a half dozen separate “colonies,” each with its own alien city-scape, located in the regions that were once known as Minnesota and southern Manitoba. Xiticix Scouts/Hunters and outposts are seen with increasing frequency in northern Manitoba, Ontario, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Several dozen towers or outposts (a cluster of 2-8 towers) are also found scattered about here and there — but all are spreading out from the Minnesota-Manitoba area in a circular pattern. These outposts are not budding new colonies but watchtowers sprinkled throughout the regions the Xiticix *plan* to inhabit over the next 20 years. They are effectively advance scouts and mili-

tary posts. What most people don’t realize is that each of these “infestations” grew from the same, single Hive and that over the next decade or two they will each continue to spread outward and inward. Scientists and wilderness folk who have observed them have come to realize that the Xiticix mean to inhabit all of Minnesota and the Province of Manitoba. From there they will spread outward into Wisconsin, the Dakotas, Upper Michigan and Ontario. After that, the alien infestation will spread to engulf the entire continent, then South America, the British Isles, Europe, Russia and the world.

The Devouring Horde

Xiticix seem to regard most other life forms, particularly intelligent ones, as their enemies. However, unlike humans, they do not actually hunt and kill most animals. Instead the alien insectoids transform the land by constantly expanding their Hive Network. A network that has no room nor tolerance for any other form of life.

This invasive expansion pushes out the flora and fauna of the original region, effectively eliminating competing life forms from the area. Thus, where the Xiticix dominate, there are no trees, few if any other types of vegetation (the occasional vine, weed or tufts of grass), and a few animals, mainly small rodents, snakes and birds, but even they are sparse. Since the Xiticix effectively breed their primary food source inside the Hive Network, they do not need to rely on hunting or domesticating any animals as livestock or cultivating other plants for food. They are a completely self-contained and self-sufficient ecosystem in and of themselves. Ironically, it is this amazing self-sufficiency that makes the Xiticix such a danger to humans and all other life forms on Rifts Earth, because the insectoids are methodically “infesting” and physically transforming the environment into a habitat that can only support their species!

Historically, humans have behaved similarly and have been responsible for the extinction of an untold number of species from insects and plants to large animals. However, humans were (believe it or not) less invasive and destructive, largely because we evolved from the same basic environment and required many of the same environmental conditions as other animals and plants that share our world. This allows humans and a number of other plants, insects and animals to adapt and coexist. The Xiticix are so different, so alien, that when they transform the environment to fit *their* needs, it makes the land useless for humans and uninhabitable for most other Earth (and alien) creatures. Left unchecked, the Xiticix could eventually cover the globe. Moreover, since there are vast tracks of lightly populated and unpopulated land, there is no rivalry, competition or war amongst their own kind. Each hive can expand at will — their one, united purpose is to survive, multiply and dominate the planet. Scientists have speculated that at the rate the Xiticix are expanding (bordering on the exponential), if left unchecked, they could cover the globe within a few hundred years.

Of concern to dimension spanning creatures is the fear that the Xiticix might eventually invade other planets; probably by accident, just as they accidentally came to Rifts Earth. Low-tech and unpopulated worlds will be especially vulnerable, because the Xiticix will be free to effectively invade, infest, expand and conquer unchallenged. Basically, that is what is happening on Rifts Earth. Realizing this, even the Splugorth will not sell Xiticix as slave stock to other worlds and rarely use them in Atlantis for



anything other than monsters to fight in the gladiatorial arenas. The Splugorth and their Minions have only recently (along with the CS, Lazlo, and a handful of others in North America) come to the realization of just how dangerous the Xiticix infestation is, and are wondering if they should take a direct hand in the extermination of the menace before things get out of control.

All this having been said, it is important to understand that the Xiticix are not world conquerors, at least in the sense that invasion and conquest are their purpose or motivation. They did not come to Earth deliberately, it was an accident. However, once on Earth they did what any human would do, gather their forces and work together to build a new life. Unfortunately, Xiticix breed much faster than humans and it is their nature to invade, conquer and destroy. Their survival — their “life” — comes at the exclusion of all others. This is evident in their incredibly aggressive nature. When they build their Hive Network it completely envelops and transforms the environment, leaving no room for competing life forms. Moreover, they regard all other dominant life forms as their enemies and systematically *exterminate* them. Humans, D-Bees and most intelligent beings fall into the category of rivals and are marked for extermination.

Xiticix wars against other life forms

The Xiticix are incredibly organized and methodical, consequently, they do not wage war and kill until they need to. This need arises either when the Hive Network has grown to come too close to a rival habitation (i.e. outpost, farm, village, town, city, etc.) or when the insectoids feel threatened. In the former case, there seems to be an invisible line of demarcation or border for

the Xiticix. That border is pushed outward as the Hive Network expands. Any settlement that falls within this constantly expanding and changing border becomes an enemy to be eliminated. Typically, a settlement will see warning signs for 1D4+2 months before an all-out invasion force is sent against them. These warning signs are a sudden and dramatically increased level of hostility including unprovoked attacks (especially when deep within the imaginary border), the slaughter of cattle and other livestock (perceived by the Xiticix as an intruding “gathering” of unwanted life forms), and raids on the non-Xiticix communities by bands of Warriors and Hunters varying from 2D6 to 1D6x10 in number. If the people living in the community don’t get the message and leave (the Xiticix are usually content for a competing force to move away), one day, without further warning or any communication, a swarm of Xiticix numbering in the thousands to hundreds of thousands will swoop down and kill every man, woman, child, and animal, including those trying to flee. They will also tear apart whatever alien (to them) structures they can — S.D.C. communities are razed to the ground.

Likewise, these aliens see any non-Xiticix “group” larger than eight — humanoids or animals — or which has created a disturbance (i.e. draws attention to itself or causes trouble) or which attacks a Hive building, attacks a Xiticix without provocation or has entered the Hive Network (i.e. set foot within one of the hive buildings, or even climbing on the side of one) as an intruder to be destroyed. Fools who enter the Hive Network may also be attacked by Workers and/or other types of Xiticix.

Against small groups of intruders (less than 20), the Xiticix dispatch a squadron of 2D6 flying Warriors. This squad will fight

to the death and battle until all interlopers are destroyed! If the intruders try to flee, the Xiticix Warriors will pursue and continue to attack with the intent of killing all the intruders. The sound of combat will alert scores of other Xiticix Warriors, but only 1D4 from outside the defending squad will join the battle. The others hover and chitter overhead like angry bees, but only watch the battle unfold. A new squad of 6-12 Xiticix will attack only when the first Xiticix squad is down to its last Warrior. This process is repeated until the intruders are slain. If by some miracle, the intruders manage to escape beyond the invisible borders of the Xiticix's domain, the Warriors waiting in the wings (no pun intended) will turn away and go back to the Hive Network. However, there is a 01-50% chance (roll percentile dice) that the squad currently engaged in combat will continue to fight until they are slain or the fleeing intruders are destroyed!

Large groups of invaders (more than 20) typically elicit a massive swarm of Warriors with two Xiticix for every one invader; giant robots and vehicles will earn 4-8 Warriors each.

It is important to note, however, that while a lone individual, a pair or small group of eight or less, can walk through the heart of a Hive Network unmolested and ignored, this is only true if the interlopers are quiet, keep a very low profile (it is best not to bring a large or loud vehicle or giant robot into Xiticix territory), and keep moving. Apparently, these aliens do not see small groups of beings "passing through" as a danger unless they linger in Xiticix territory for more than a day, pause to make camp, or cause trouble.

Note: Disguising oneself with Xiticix scent glands is about the only way to decrease the odds of being bothered when traveling so close to a Hive City. This tactic will confuse Warriors and Hunters who will not bother or challenge the disguised individuals unless they threaten the hive or its members. Workers, Diggers and even Nannies are completely fooled, and will ignore those who "smell right." This gives the "scent disguised" invaders the initiative (no need to roll), the element of surprise and confusion on their side. In fact, this is so disorienting to *Workers*, *Diggers*, and *Nannies* (nits and grubs too) that they fight at half their normal attacks per melee round and at -3 on initiative. They just can not figure out why one of their own (the scent disguised stranger) would be attacking them. Unfortunately, this tactic is not foolproof as the Queens are never fooled by this trick (not even for an instant) and Warriors, Super Warriors and Hunters get over the confusion and battle the invaders without penalty after the initial melee round. **Note:** Other than regional Wild Psi-Stalkers who regularly battle the Xiticix, very few people know about this trick. See the section describing the Xiticix and their Chemical Abilities for details.

Challenges

Keeping on the move is absolutely key. Travelers walking through a Hive Network must *never* pause for more than two or three minutes, and never stop to pitch camp while in the Xiticix's domain. Stopping within the borders of a Xiticix Hive Network (let alone within the Network itself) is seen as a threat or challenge. A "challenge" that a squadron of Xiticix Warriors will rush forth to accept. Once battle is begun, there is no room for explanations, negotiation or apologies, only the battle to the death described above. **Note:** Words seem to fall on deaf ears. If the Xiticix understand spoken languages they ignore them and show

no mercy. Psionic and magical means of communication also rarely have any influence on the Xiticix, although they, presumably, understand.

The same conditions apply to Xiticix "airspace." Unless a group of people is flying higher than 10,000 feet (3048 m), or is small and non-threatening, they will be met by a squadron of defenders and a battle will ensue.

Although a traveler can walk through the outer edges of the Xiticix border and even directly through the outside of a Hive Network/City without serious concern, such treks are not uneventful. It is virtually impossible to pass through Xiticix territory, let alone a true Hive Network, without being spotted by Xiticix defenders. An individual traveler and small groups, in particular, are likely to be "buzzed" by a lone Warrior or Hunter swooping down on the character(s), forcing him to duck or get bumped, brushed or pushed to the ground. If the character(s) being buzzed takes no action against his antagonist and continues to keep moving, the Warrior will stop after a minute or two and let him/them continue. However, such an unwanted intruder or group *may* be challenged by one particular Warrior or Hunter while the rest of his squad (and probably scores of other Xiticix) watch from above. This may, or may not, be a fight to the death, but even if it is, the others will not join the battle unless they too are attacked or other humanoids join the battle. When the one on one battle is done, the others fly away. If the Warrior lost, they depart with the corpse of their fallen comrade in their arms, and the travelers are allowed to continue their journey. If the Warrior wins, he may challenge another member of the group, or fly away (with his squad) triumphant and happy. What the Xiticix prove from such challenges is not clear. Presumably it is that this is their land and that they are willing to defend it to the death.

Thankfully, a group of non-Xiticix is seldom challenged more than once every 10 hours, and the battle is typically one on one with everybody else as spectators. However, if other members of the traveling group join the battle, it will become a free-for-all, with the other Xiticix jumping in to teach the "cheaters" a lesson.

Such skirmishes turn into battles as previously described.

Food

Most people, the CS included, believe adult Xiticix are omnivorous, like humans, and feed on both the flesh and bones of animals as well as the fibers and grain of plants. However, the last six years of close study has suggested otherwise. Except for the occasional live or dead body of a humanoid or animal carried into the Hive Network, and the occasional report or story of prey being devoured (and sometimes regurgitated as some kind of goo or "Sludge"), there have been few accounts of Xiticix hunting and killing for food. This has led some to speculate that the alien bug men feed on P.P.E. or other forms of energy. Other scientists wonder if the Xiticix are cannibals who eat their dead — they often carry their dead and dying back to the hive. Still others have suggested that the Xiticix tend farms of strange alien plants deep underground. Unfortunately, the Xiticix remain very much an enigma, and any or part of several of these hypotheses could be true, or not.

Game Master Information! The rather outlandish idea that the Xiticix might keep a secret, underground farm comes closest to the truth. The Hive Network is composed of towering, mushroom-like buildings and a labyrinth of underground tunnels and

chambers. The walls, ceilings and sometimes even the floors of the tunnels and chambers *inside* these constructs are covered in a luminous moss — some alien fungus. The light that radiates from this living carpet is a pale green and only provides a dim (eerie for most humans), natural light throughout most of the inner areas, tunnels and chambers of the Hive Network. Its illumination is roughly equal to a 40 watt light bulb in a large room. The few humans or D-Bees who have ever been inside a Hive and lived to tell the tale, have noticed the luminous growth, but either assumed it was a natural form of lighting or gave it no thought whatsoever.

The truth is that this often thick carpet of fungus is the *food* eaten by the Xiticix. It thrives in the dark and may draw nutrients from the resin secreted by the Xiticix to make and fortify the walls of their constructs. It also grows at an amazing rate, so quickly that it keeps up with the steadily increasing Xiticix population, provided it has sufficient space to spread into and grow. Thus, the greater the Xiticix population, the larger the Hive Network must become with new constructs, buildings and tunnels created to accommodate the growing population. In turn, this new network of buildings and tunnels creates an ever expanding habitat for the fast spreading fungus to cover. A truly symbiotic relationship.

The fungus is carried in the lungs and patches on the body of the Queens (usually in joints and creases in the natural body armor). Consequently, if she is transplanted to a new location, she has a culture of fungus to grow into a new crop in the new environment. Cool, humid, dim environments are the best, and exactly what the inner areas of the Hive Network are.

The fungus grows on the walls, ceiling, floor and everywhere, including the Queen's Chamber and the Nurseries. The only places where the fungus is not found are on the uppermost interior chambers and areas nearest entrance/exit portals. None grows on the exterior walls because the environment is too harsh — too much sunlight, heat, rain water and wind. The fast growing fungus is easily harvested by Workers, but can be stripped from the walls and eaten without needing any processing or special preparations. Thus, like sheep grazing on the grass growing on the side of a mountain, the Xiticix eat the coverings from the very walls. Whatever is stripped away and eaten grows back in a few short weeks, keeping pace with the consumption of the population.

The availability of food is another element that controls the size of the Xiticix population and level of expansion across the land. Xiticix need space to build their sprawling hive communities. They instinctively know how many Xiticix can be supported per physical structure and how much food can be grown (typically 15-20% more than actually needed). When a Xiticix colony exceeds 500 million, the original colony splinters into 1D6 new and independent colonies. However, with this division, each group now regards the other as a rival. Likewise, new Queens are born and sent into the world to establish completely new colonies (see *A Different Way*, under the **Life Span** section for details).

Each new, independent colony will go on to establish and expand its own domain until it reaches approximately 500 million. When the population approaches that number, the birthrate within the colony slows down to a crawl. These large colonies do not divide again until most of the available space in the world is inhabited by them and their brothers. When 90% of the free space in the world is initially taken, the colonies that are near 500 million divide into ten different colonies and expand by conquering

and killing their neighbors and rivals! However, from that point forward, should a colony reach 500 million, it will not splinter and can exceed 500 million by 2D4x10 million. While the colony may grow to nearly 600 million, it will not expand beyond that. To maintain this population level, the Xiticix dramatically reduce the birth rate to keep the status quo. (See *A Different Way*, under the **Life Span** section for details.)

Note: Although the fungus is the primary food source of the Xiticix, they can, in a pinch, also eat fresh or rotting fruit, mushrooms, lichen and potatoes. People and animals are not actually eaten, although they are devoured and regurgitated to create the infamous "Sludge," which accelerates the growth of young Xiticix. Note that only the Queens and Nannies can create "Sludge."

Hive Cities

Each Hive Network or city has its own Queen's and distinctive scent (recognizable to other Xiticix and Dog Pack mutants). The living structures resemble giant mushrooms that tower four to eight stories high. Each holds scores of Xiticix.

Defenses

The task of defending the Hive Network, Queens, and borders is the job of the Xiticix Warriors. They are a constant presence flying around and roaming inside the towers of the hive complex, as well as over the lands within their borders and neighboring regions. Surprisingly, these aggressive creatures do not attack when outside their own borders unless threatened or attacked first.

A number of special towers on the edges of a Hive Network are typically occupied by Warriors, but they are found throughout the complex, particularly the upper areas and towers. Their exact number varies depending on the size of the colony, but Warriors represent 40-45% of the overall population. In the larger complexes, each of these "Warrior Towers" can hold over a thousand Warriors, with dozens of towers ringing the hive. Warriors not only fly around the hive and its perimeters, but they can also be found walking the grounds, sitting on the towers, clinging to the bridges, and crouched within the entrances.

The Warriors and most Xiticix are always active, even when not agitated. Thus, even during peaceful periods, the Warriors are constantly alert, flying on patrols, inspecting (and repairing) exterior defenses, checking on the workers, inspecting or posting themselves for the defense of the inner chambers and tunnels, roaming the corridors and ever vigilant for signs of intrusion and danger. When necessary, especially during times of crisis, such as a tunnel or tower collapsing (usually the handiwork of sabotage from invaders), Warriors join in the digging out of survivors, securing the surrounding buildings, and the rebuilding of the fallen structure. Meanwhile hordes of Warriors and Hunters search for any traces of invaders who may be responsible. During such frantic and intense responses to attack or danger, the Xiticix will attack and kill most any large animal and humanoid they encounter within their territory.

When something disturbs the hive colony, Warriors pouring from the hive like ants from a disturbed mound. Vast numbers of riled Xiticix respond to such disturbances, even when they are



minor threats or scares. Attackers or invaders will find themselves outnumbered two to one within one melee round (15 seconds) and outnumbered by 10 to one in a matter of 1D6+4 melee rounds (a minute and fifteen seconds to two and a half minutes)! This instant mobility and response is directly attributed to the chemical communications used by the insect-like Xiticix. Once a single Xiticix signals a threat or alarm, others who detect it will do likewise, forming a chain of chemical alarm that eventually includes the *entire* Hive Network in a matter of minutes. It would not be strange to see thousands of agitated Warriors take to the air around a large hive simply because a squadron of Coalition Sky Cycles barreled overhead at 500 miles per hour (800 km), even if the offending machines are already miles away. Such basically unfounded alarms will have the hive stirred up for 1D4 hours, as the Warriors and the rest of the hive (mainly Hunters and Workers) remain on edge, waiting to pounce at the first signs of trouble. When an attack is genuine, thousands to millions (depending on the size of the Hive Network) will mobilize to defend the colony, particularly the Queen's Chamber, Birthing areas and Nurseries hidden away underground.

The hive itself is part of the Xiticix defenses. It is an M.D.C. structure, surely not an intentional development on the part of the Xiticix, but definitely an evolutionary one. Anything that could kill an M.D.C. insect would only be stopped by something at least as strong, such as an M.D.C. wall. Their defenses are instinctual and the current mud-resin towers serve them quite well. Most of the towers, bridges and walls inside and out are made of an earth and resin mixture. Common earth is whipped into a mud and supplemented with a resin secreted by all Xiticix. The end result is a sort of M.D.C. "concrete" that the Xiticix apply with their mouths, antennae and hands. Of course, when constructing the Xiticix Hive Network with a mixture of M.D.C. resin and S.D.C. mud, the resulting building materials will be less resistant to damage than if the entire building were made of pure M.D.C. resin, but this concrete like mix is sturdy and durable. Xiticix Diggers can exude more resin than any of their brethren, and are both the chief architects of the Hive Network and living resin/concrete manufacturers. They often use boulders, stone and scavenged pieces of M.D.C. metal as the cornerstones and bases to build their towers or as additional support struts for large and special buildings. Meanwhile, the Queen's Chamber, Egg Chambers and Nurseries are usually lined or reinforced with pure M.D.C. resin to protect them from attack and invaders. Furthermore, the underground tunnel network, which can extend up to 200 feet (61 m) below the surface, has the natural protection of the very ground itself. Thus, underground chambers and tunnels are well protected from combat, even explosions, on the surface.

Typical towers in a hive commonly have approximately 30 M.D.C. for every 10 square feet (0.9 square meters) of exterior or interior wall. Only the walls of the Nursery and Elder Queen's Chambers have double the M.D.C.

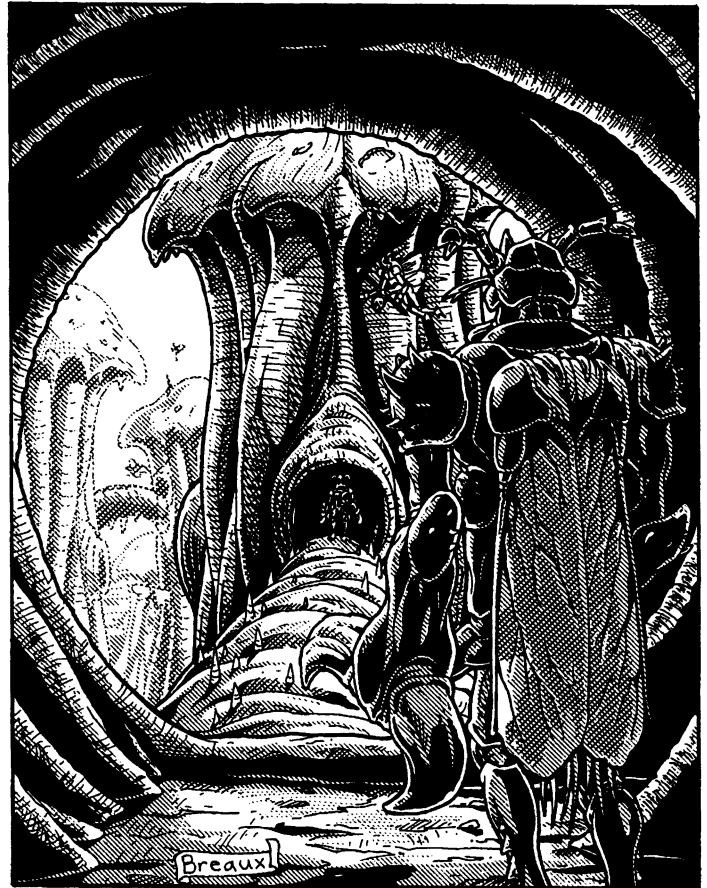
- A single floor or story of a tower will have the equivalent of about 1000 M.D.C.
- 5000 +1D4x100 M.D.C., overall, for a five story tower.
- 10,000 +1D6x100 M.D.C., overall, for a ten story tower.
- 12,000 +2D6x100 M.D.C. for a 11-18 story tower or a tower that is 9-12 stories but much wider/larger than usual.
- 400+1D6x100 M.D.C. for a typical bridge or ramp.

Note: Half the towers will actually possess *half* the M.D.C. noted. This happens when the inner structure is pure S.D.C. material (wood, scraps of metal, stone, clay, etc.) coated with 1-3 inches of M.D.C. mixed resin.

Solid resin construction offers roughly double the M.D.C. listed, but is rare.

A typical tower is 5-12 stories tall; never higher than 18.

Other defenses of the hive



1. Placement of entrances high above the ground, never lower than three stories (roughly 30-40 feet/9-12 m off the ground); usually 5 stories or higher. These crude circular or oval openings can be small enough to allow only one Xiticix to enter or exit at a time, or large enough for a swarm of 3-9 to exit simultaneously. Often one sees a line of low flying Xiticix arriving to enter the hive, while a line of Xiticix exit from the top of the opening (either flying out from along the top of the portal or crawling on the ceiling and making a lunging leap into the sky). These high entrances and exits are easily accessed by the insect-alien who can both fly and walk on walls like bugs.

Obviously, the easiest way for humans and D-Bees to reach these entrances is by some form of flight power, but climbing to them can be done if one can avoid detection by the numerous eyes watching for such invaders — which is not likely. Even characters who are masters of stealth are -60% to prowl and hide, and magical Chameleon is -20%, and is Shadow Meld -10%! Add an additional penalty of -20% if the character is bleeding. These penalties apply in part due to the Xiticix's acute sense of smell and detection of chemicals and odors.

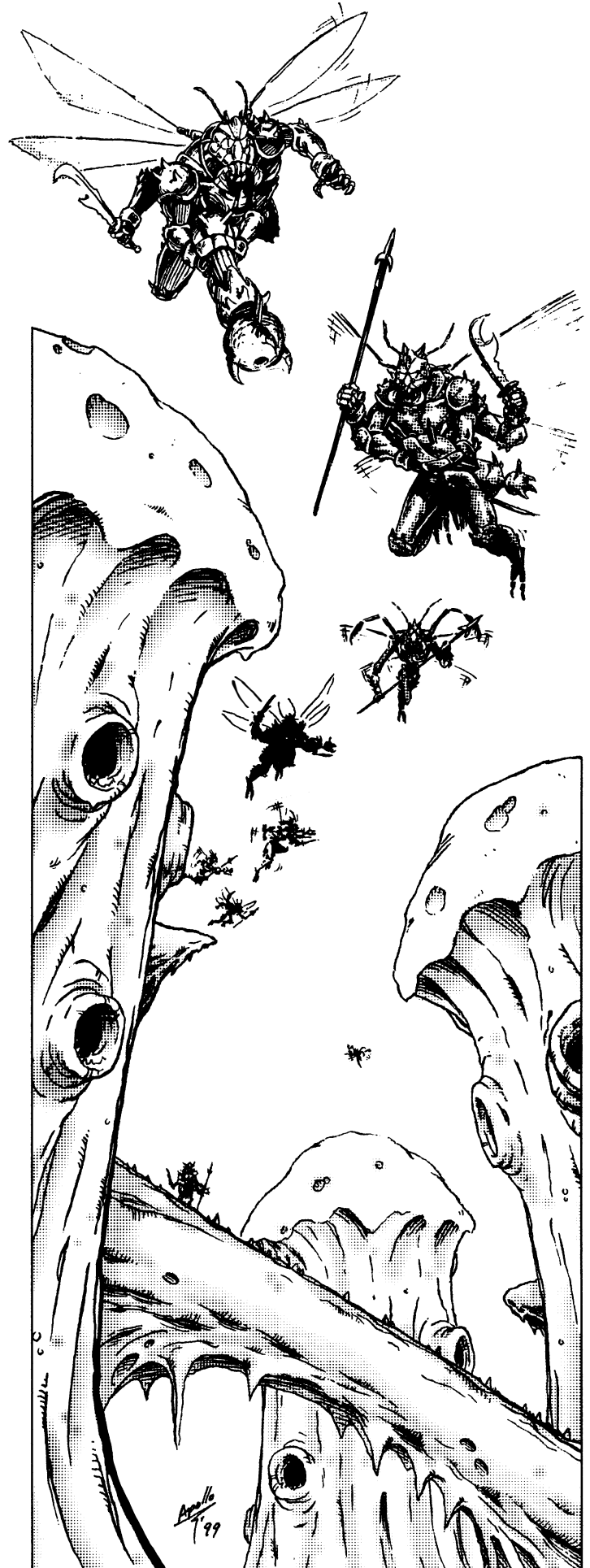
2. Spines, spikes, barbs, protrusions and rough edges. The Xiticix deliberately place small, sharp or jagged spines, spikes and outcroppings to make scaling their towers difficult. The first 2-3 stories of the tower from the ground up will have thousands of small needle-sized to dagger-sized spines and protrusions covering it. After that, there are strategic clusters of barbs and spikes (typically dagger to sword-sized), including a cluster located below most entrance portals. While some of the larger spines can be used for hand-holds, the majority get in the way, scrape, cut and stab.

Not only are these barbs and spikes an impediment to climbers and a deterrent to invaders, but they serve the add purpose of alerting the Hive's defenders of approaching enemies. The Xiticix's keen olfactory senses will quickly detect the blood scent of any invader who cuts himself. While those clad in body armor or blessed with Mega-Damage hides are impervious to the jagged protrusions (leaving only harmless nicks and scratches), the sound of the armor or tough hide scraping across the barbs often makes enough noise to cause 2D6 Warriors to investigate. **Penalties:** -15% to climb/scale walls and reduce climbing speed by 30%; the above prowling penalties also apply, even with magical versions of climb or prowl. **Damage:** 3D6 points of S.D.C. damage per every 10 feet/one story climbed. **Note:** These jagged edges and barbs have no negative impact on the Xiticix. They can climb and run across them at full speed, without any impediment whatsoever.

3. The spiny bridges. The floor of the bridges (as well as a third of the interior ramps and the first 10-20 yards/meters on the floor of an entrance), where a human would normally walk, is covered in uneven spikes about the size of a dagger. Unlike a dagger, they are cone-shaped like hundreds of small stalagmites with pointed tips. Most of these tips will hurt if a character leans on one but most will not break skin unless the individual falls on one to several (1D4 S.D.C. damage for one, 3D6 S.D.C. if the entire body is dropped, falls or is knocked on top of this spiny flooring). The main reason for these spines is not to impale invaders, but to impede their movement. The flooring is impossible for humanoids and most large animals to walk across without stumbling, falling to their knees (1D4 S.D.C.), tripping and moving at a snail's pace. Part of the ingenuity in the spiky flooring's design is to make the spines in uneven sizes so none of them stick out at exactly the same level (like a bed of nails). If they were all the same (like a bed of nails) one could walk across the spikes rapidly and easily, especially with protected feet. However, uneven spikes mean some are only a few inches tall, others six inches (15 cm), others a foot (0.3 m), and everything in between. The result is a jagged, uneven surface impossible to run across. A few spines are usually placed on the underside too, just for good measure. **Penalties:** Reduce Spd attribute by 75%. Trying to leap from point to point will cause 3D4 S.D.C. damage per leap with a 01-75% likelihood of falling down and losing initiative and taking another 3D6 S.D.C. points of damage.

Even standing and keeping one's balance is difficult on this uneven and jagged flooring, giving humanoids the penalties of -15% to maintain balance, -3 on initiative, and -1 to strike, parry and dodge.

Any extreme or sudden movements are likely to cause the character to lose his balance, stumble and lose one melee action and initiative. Characters with the balance skill via acrobatics, gymnastics or other abilities must roll under their skill percent-



age. Those without such a skill roll percentile dice. 01-50% means they keep their balance, 51-00% means they lose it. Likewise, any roll to strike that is lower than five means the character loses his balance and stumbles with the usual penalties.

If near the edge of the bridge, there is a good chance the leaping, lunging or wildly attacking character will fall right over the edge to the ground below. Damage is 3D6 S.D.C./Hit Points of damage per story of height, or one M.D. point per every three stories for Mega-Damage creatures. Plus fallen victims, even M.D.C. characters, lose initiative and two melee actions (momentarily stunned by the fall, if not killed outright).

Note: As usual, the uneven and spiky flooring does NOT hamper the Xiticix who can scurry across it on all fours or sixes at full speed and perfect balance, or simply fly over it.

4. Creative uses of chemical trails. Xiticix, like many Earth insects, leave behind a chemical trail that they and other Xiticix can sense/smell and follow. Thus, they can tell if the trail is fresh (within the last hour), old (up to four days), and often if the trail has been interrupted and broken by intruders.

Likewise, their acute sense of smell enables them to detect trace amounts of blood as well as recognize and follow strong odors including urine, animal spore, cooked foods (i.e. that unwrapped sandwich or chicken leg), gasoline, grease, cologne, hair spray, heavy body perspiration and other odors distinct to humanoids.

5. Getting in is easy. Going down means traveling through a deadly gauntlet. The heart of the hive community is underground. (beneath a floor of M.D.C. resin, rock and earth), where the Queens, Egg Chamber, Nurseries, and less commonly seen Xiticix are found. However, to get in, invaders must go *up* and then go *down*. Not only is this an inconvenient detour and expenditure of energy, but the invaders are probably fighting (or trying to avoid) flying Warriors outside in order to get in.

Once inside the tower, at least five stories up, the invader must now work his way *down*. Here, the obstacle is not only a labyrinth of tunnels, but level after level of massing Xiticix Warriors who must be fought to advance. Cunning creatures, there are no vertical tunnels that drop straight down to the bottom, all downward tunnels stop after about a story and those descending must jog over to the next one, often dozens to over a hundred yards/meters away; and not always obvious, so they have to look around and enter different chambers to find the next opening to go down. When an invader has been located, the tower(s) where they are traveling swells with Warriors and Hunters (Workers if necessary, although they are usually kept in the lower areas as reserves). Hundreds of them appear, forcing invaders to fight every inch of the way. As noted elsewhere, a chemical alarm is immediately released whenever the hive is seriously threatened as well as when a Warrior is killed. In less than five minutes, the entire Hive Network, regardless of size, will be placed on alert with throngs of frenzied Warriors responding to the danger.

The only time such an alert does not occur is when the invader, typically a small strike force, has managed to successfully sneak inside without being discovered. Likewise, because of the Xiticix's strange outlook toward small groups, if the invading force has eight members or less, a general alarm will not be sounded, and the interlopers need only deal with the initial squad of 2D6 Warriors, and any Warriors, Hunters, Nannies or Queens they may encounter thereafter. Of course, spilling the blood of a

single Warrior will automatically release the danger chemical and alert at least that quarter of the Hive Network. Likewise, scores of Warriors will converge on that area, with hundreds to thousands mobilized and ready for action.

6. Clamp and Destroy Strategy. Wherever an invader enters, he runs the serious risk of getting sealed inside the tower or tunnels and getting besieged from Warriors coming from the top and bottom, as well as the sides. This is known as the "clamp and destroy" strategy. To make this work, 100-200 Xiticix Warriors live in the dome or hood of the mushroom shape at the very top of each tower, with hundreds more scattered throughout the tower. Consequently, no matter where in the tower intruders may enter, a swarm of Warriors drops down from above, supplemented by those flying in at the top and middle entrances and from the sides, as well as those rushing up from the base of the tower. Even if the invaders manage to avoid getting crushed by the "clamping" Xiticix forces inside, and get outside, they must face the angry army hovering in the air around the tower and those gathering on the ground — effectively another "clamping" action. Unless the intruders can fly, teleport or dimensionally Rift, they have little hope of escaping alive.

7. Tunnels. Battling Xiticix inside their hive is a very dangerous endeavor, even if one has a sizable army at his disposal. The width of the tunnels limits the heavy support one can bring into the towers and underground tunnels, typically limiting combat forces to small 1-3 man vehicles, power armor and cyborgs while the heavy armored vehicles are left topside to provide what little support they can. Small, fast vehicles and power armor are good in the tunnels, but they are limited by the cramped corners, many turns, and sheer weight of Xiticix numbers.

The sheer number of bug men hive invaders will face places their ranks in constant danger of being overrun.

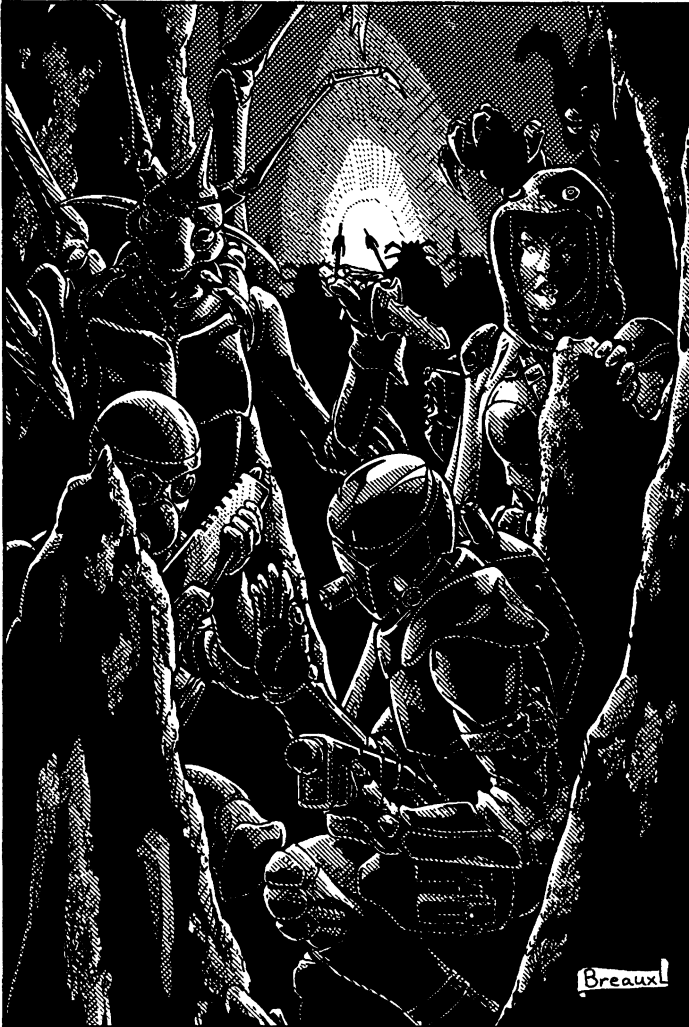
Clever and resourceful, the Xiticix will use Diggers (and/or Workers) to create new tunnels and punch through walls so they can strike from unexpected places and angles. So even if a tunnel is collapsed or blocked by the invader at some junction, the Xiticix may burrow through the barrier, dig around it, or pop through at some other, unexpected point. Similarly, the Xiticix frequently divide the enemy by deliberately collapsing parts of their own tunnels and attacking the splintered bands of invaders one group at a time, or simultaneously from numerous defense forces. Collapsing walls and tunnel sections is also used to conceal and protect the Queen's Chamber, Egg Chambers and Nurseries.

8. Scent Identification. The Xiticix rely heavily on their olfactory senses to identify members of their own and rival Xiticix colonies, the presence of non-Xiticix, to locate invaders inside the Hive Network and as a warning system. In this latter case, all Warriors, Super Warriors, Hunters and Queens release a distinctive "Death Scent" that alerts all Xiticix in the area of their untimely and unnatural demise. See the section describing the Xiticix species for details about a variety of scent and chemical abilities.

Note: In general, *without* the influence of leaders such as a Queen, Super Warrior, Hunter or Nanny, the Xiticix will attack first with their TK rifles, firing as they close the range to the enemy (they cover approximately 500 yards/1500 feet/457 meters per melee when flying). Once they reach melee range, they change to spears, bayonets and swords in an attempt to overwhelm the enemy, very much resembling insects as they swarm

in massive numbers to overwhelm, incapacitate and kill their opponents. 10-20% of the enemy will be captured alive and turned into “Sludge.”

Important Note: Diggers, Workers, grubs and nits will usually ignore individuals or small groups of non-Xiticix people even when inside the hive, unless they are frightened, threatened or attacked, or told to attack by a superior such as a Warrior, Hunter, Nanny or Queen. Nannies will always defend the larvae and eggs to the death, as will Workers or any Xiticix who realizes they are in jeopardy from outsiders.



Xiticix Instincts, Combat and Tactics

As noted in all of the Xiticix entries, these insect aliens are “considered to be in the same category as a supernatural predator, functioning on instinct as much as intellect.” What this means for combat can be a bit tricky for the Game Master. Exactly what kind of instincts do the Xiticix have? What kind of predators do they think like? They look like insects, but do they act completely like bugs? It might take an animal behavioral expert to sort it all out, but a number of things are pretty obvious and they are noted in the following text.

Xiticix are rather insect-like in their combat activities. If one gets riled, those around them tend to get excited and every one of them starts moving about rapidly. The agitated creatures are

primed for action, and quick to respond to trouble, attacking any outsider/invader/intruder they happen to notice. This is general Xiticix behavior and has been noted repeatedly in Coalition reconnaissance and battle reports, but the intelligence and cunning of some of the Xiticix species differ dramatically from one another, with the Warriors and Hunters exhibiting (instinctive?) strategies and tactics such as coordinated attacks, feints, ambushes, pincer tactics, and large troop operations. They use the weight of numbers, swarming attacks and aerial combat to their advantage, and are organized, methodical, loyal, fearless and obedient in combat, even in the face of death. They (instinctively) seem to select the best strategy or tactic for the situation and act swiftly. However, their methodical behavior and reliance on sheer numbers also make them predictable (not that this is always helpful to their opponents).

The Elder Queen and Nannies command troops to engage in diversionary and holding tactics to protect or enable important members of the hive to escape; such as the Queen and/or as many grubs, nits and/or eggs that can be evacuated as possible. The young Queens are often sacrificed and may serve as part of the diversion or holding tactic, for as long as the Elder Queen (or at least a few dozen eggs or larvae) survives, the colony can live on.

When in the presence of other Xiticix, from Warriors to Workers and Diggers, the **Hunter** seems to be regarded as an authority figure, a leader or high ranking officer (Major or Colonel). They are capable of organizing, directing and leading other Xiticix into attack squads and swarms or get them to do whatever is needed; fight, build, etc. **The Hunters** and the **Super Warriors** are the squad, company and battalion leaders who command most military operations. **Diggers, Workers** and the average **Warriors** simply do as they are instructed. **Nannies** have autonomy when it comes to the well being of the Birthing and Nursery Chambers and can even command Hunters and Warriors to protect larvae and eggs. The rare **Super Warriors** are the Brigadier Generals and ultimate warriors. **The young Queens** act as Generals and the **Elder Queen** is the Supreme Commander in Chief. Each has a job in times of war and executes it to the best of their ability.

One of the dangerous things about Xiticix, however, is that while the lower ranking ones can be tricked, somewhat confused, and sometimes divided, they rarely break ranks even when defeat seems imminent or when their leaders are destroyed. For example, if the majority of the leaders are slain, including young Queens, the Warriors, Workers and other lesser Xiticix will become more frantic. However, their fear and desperation is channeled into a frenzied killing surge that compels them to fight their attackers to the death! They don't run away in fear or shame, instead they fight to the bitter end and with more resolve than ever. Their only thought is to destroy the enemy and keep their attackers away from the Birthing (egg) and Nursery Chambers. If fighting an enemy they believe they can repel, the Xiticix protect these areas and fight to send the enemy into retreat. If the hive seems like it could fall, they fight to the death in order to give the Nannies and the Workers and Warriors under their charge time to evacuate the young and escape to restart the hive colony. The sacrifice of the adults (theoretically) preserves the hive and ensures its survival and rebirth in the future.

The only time there is widespread panic is when all the young Queens are believed to have been slain and the *Elder Queen* is killed or captured and taken away. Each time one is killed, a

chemical is released that lets the colony know of their passing. With the death of all Queens (a rarity), 2D4x10% of the hive community will splinter into small groups of 1D6x10 individuals and either disperse into the wilderness or run around in a panic not knowing what to do. In either case, these confused and terrified individuals have no initiative, nor direction or purpose — reduce their number of attacks, combat bonuses, and skill performance by half. These penalties last for 1D4x10 days. In the event of this rare occurrence, the colony population is easily scattered and exterminated.

The percentage of the population that does not panic and scatter, continues to fight to the death, and tries to keep the enemy from the Birthing and Nursery Chambers for as long as possible. It is these defenders and survivors who will wait for a new Queen from the eggs or larvae that have been saved, and slowly rebuild their colony. After the war, there is a 01-88% likelihood that these survivors, eggs and/or larvae in tow, will return to the old Hive Network. There is only a 12% chance (89-00% roll on percentile dice) that they will leave the area and start a new hive someplace else, usually within 100 miles/160 km of the original.

After 1D4x10 days, those who panicked and fled will begin to return to the old Hive Network in search of survivors and the hope of rebuilding. If there is no Queen and no eggs or larvae, they fall into a depressed state, stay within the Hive Network, stop eating and slowly waste away. Until they die from starvation (which takes an excruciatingly long, 40+1D6x10 days) they attack and kill any non-Xiticix they encounter.

Other notable Xiticix tactics

The insect-like aliens attack in small groups typically called “squads” or “squadrons” by humans or large groups to armies considered “swarms.” Both designations are appropriate as most Xiticix can fly and tend to use swarming tactics. A good number of Warriors (20-25%) and the majority of Workers and other non-combat Xiticix (70%) are held in reserve and left to hold and defend the heart of the hive network underground, namely the Queens and the Birthing and Nursery Chambers. They may also hold in reserve 25-50% of their forces in the field, wearing down the enemy with successive attack “waves”, as well as using rotating groups of attackers (to keep troops fresh) and hit and run tactics.

Each Xiticix Warrior weighs around 500 pounds (227 kg) and possesses supernatural P.S., so even supernaturally strong opponents like demons and dragons, and giant-sized characters can be carried airborne or pulled to the ground by a handful of them (three or more).

One tactic using their weight and sheer numbers, is to pile on top of a dangerous, large or powerful enemy like football players tackling a receiver. This can effectively bury the individual beneath a pile of a half dozen to several dozen (depending on their adversary’s size and the level of anger or frenzy of the Xiticix). All the while, they stab, jab, punch, scratch and bite at their quarry. Unless the victim of such a piling attack can squirm, fight or teleport free, the very weight of the crushing mass may do him in (i.e. four Warriors weigh about 2000 pounds/900 kg or one ton). The alien insects also have superhuman endurance and can wait quite some time for extra tough victims to quit struggling at the bottom of a pile-up. Severe battery, broken bones, collapsed lungs, lacerations, suffocation (at least into uncon-

sciousness) and death are all likely outcomes of such a brutal, smothering assault.

Enemies who kill more than a dozen Xiticix in one single battle or prove to be noticeably dangerous, will become a primary targets. Either overwhelming numbers will be sent against them or the Xiticix Warriors may fall back and strike using long-range weapons.

Small humanoid invasion groups may be able to sneak inside, but if detected they will have to take on the hordes of swarming Warriors alone. When such battles occur inside the hive, the Xiticix will rely heavily on swarming tactics, but layered ranks of Warriors firing TK guns down long tunnels shouldn’t be too uncommon, especially near the chambers of the Queen and those of the eggs where the leader types will most assuredly take command.



The average human or D-Bee is most likely to encounter and engage the Xiticix outside the Hive Network while the insects are on patrol or monitoring their borders. In this scenario, the standard battle tactics will be employed by the Xiticix, especially since the aliens can start firing on targets from the full extent of their weapons’ range. The main difference is that the insects will be limited in numbers because patrol sizes rarely exceed twenty and are more often 6-12 members strong. Always remember the death chemical given off by all fighter-type Xiticix and Queens that are killed, for it will summon every other patrol that can detect it to come investigate the source of the distress. Of course, the closer one is to the hive, the closer together the patrols are and

the quicker they can respond to a chemical alarm. Well armed humanoids are likely to have the advantage of superior long-ranged weapons, and Xiticix are especially vulnerable to missile attacks.

When something big happens, like a major assault on the Hive Network (whether by a rival Xiticix colony or a human army) or a natural disaster, it stirs up the hive like a hornets' nest. The immediate reaction will be obvious as hordes of Warriors stream from the hive to repel the assault, attack the enemy and re-secure the areas around the Hive City. Once the immediate excitement passes, the insect aliens will remain agitated for several days (1D4 days for significant events, 2D4 for those that impact 10% of the hive, and up to 1D6 weeks if as much as 50% of a hive). This agitation usually translates into very high levels of aggression and increased patrols. Raiding swarms are also almost guaranteed.

A **raiding swarm** is sent out after an attack with one of two simple missions: Retaliation or defense of the hive at all costs. Whether that retaliation is justified or the aggressor is known does not matter. Their destructive rage is directed at everything not Xiticix — humans, D-Bees, cattle, innocent passers-by, ramshackle old huts, small villages, CS patrols, and any sentient being who catches their attention. The aliens do not distinguish between humanoids and will lash out at the nearest ones without regard for their innocence or guilt. It matters not that humans may have been responsible for instigating an attack (or threat), D-Bees, demons, dragons and other life forms will pay the price for invoking their ire. Likewise, quiet, peaceful human and/or D-Bee settlements will suddenly become convenient targets simply because they are there.

Raiding swarms pour out of the Hiveland and into the countryside to extract their revenge and to reinforce their borders. Such frenzied raids rarely occur unless there has been some significant disturbance or threat within the boundaries of Xiticix territory. Retaliatory swarms have no interest in capturing food or taking prisoners. Their goal is to secure their territory, destroy all threats, and unleash pure death and destruction. They will rain TK bolts down on people and buildings without mercy and with no target preference (other than those who return their aggression with vigor).

A Xiticix swarm is also unleashed when the Xiticix colony needs to expand its borders. This expansion will not only terrorize humans and D-Bees within the claimed territory, but if it reaches into the domain of a different Hive Network, the resulting clashes will spark war between the two rival colonies. In this case, raiding swarms from both of the hives could terrorize the countryside as they lash out in all directions. **Note:** When a young Xiticix is accelerated to maturity to become a Queen, she often develops aggressive tendencies. When this happens, the rest of the hive takes a step up the aggression scale with her, and raiding swarms become common even when there is no obvious reason for them.

Inside the Hive Towers

Getting to the heart of the Hive Network is an arduous battle. The majority of the areas within the towers themselves are the living areas of the Warriors, Hunters, and a small number of Workers (about 20% of the tower's inhabitants). Below them, underground, are the truly sensitive areas of the hive, such as the

Queens' Chambers, Egg Chambers and Nurseries. They are located below the base of the towers, beneath a top covering of resin and tons of rock and earth. The subterranean tunnels within a hive form an intricate maze of interconnected tunnels and rooms with little or no discernible pattern (at least to humans),



which easily baffle and confuse most non-Xiticix invaders. In addition, the clever monsters make fake or false tunnels that lead to dead ends in order to trap interlopers, and tunnels that go around in a circle or into the living chamber of Xiticix Warriors (always glad to welcome intruders). Pitfalls from vertical tunnels and other dangers are also a constant problem for humanoids who tend to think “flat” and “straight ahead,” rather than “up and down” as well.

The Xiticix themselves have no problems navigating the maze of tunnels or finding their way, however, for when instinct fails them, chemical trails always point the way.

The Queen’s Chamber is located somewhere under the city in a massive subterranean cavern. Near her are four Birthing Chambers where the eggs are stored. Each hive colony has a minimum population level that the Elder Queen can sense. When the population drops below a minimum number, the Queen knows to increase egg production or even to establish additional, egg laying, young Queens.

Key Areas Include:

The Chamber of the Elder Queen

Young Queen Chambers

Egg Chambers

Nursery Chambers

Living Chambers (for all types of Xiticix)

Storage Areas (food, weapons, etc.)

Pool Chambers (drinking and cleaning water)

Tunnels to a Hive Tower (and the outside world)

Beyond the Hive Network

Beyond the hive proper, the open territories loosely claimed by the hive can extend as far as a 150 mile (240 km) radius and are patrolled by squadrons or groups of Warriors and pairs of Hunters/Scouts, although the occasional contingent of Workers or Diggers out collecting mud for construction are not at all uncommon.

As one gets closer to the Hive Network, the frequency of Warrior patrols will increase and they will often get larger and more aggressive. At ten miles (16 km), extreme caution is a necessity, for this is the border of the Hive Network. Even animals are rare within five miles (8 km) of a Hive City.

The Growth & Life Cycle of the Xiticix

“I tell ya, them biguns was eatin’ them people alive and it made them there things on their behinds glow when they chewed. Few minutes later they would spit up this ... (hand motion as he searches for a word) ... sludge. They’d stack the sludge in holes in the wall and it growed like a fungus. Then they and them other ones would feed it to the lil nits.”

— CS excerpt from the debriefing of Orion Greenfeld

The life cycles of all Xiticix begin with a Queen. Within her chamber deep in the bowels of the hive, she will spend her entire life producing eggs and directing the colony through chemical excretions and psionics. The Queen’s Chamber is almost exactly the same in every hive: a massive oval or circular chamber with

high ceilings. The Queen never leaves this chamber, except to flee when a hive is being devastated by invaders who threaten to destroy it (a rare occurrence). Food is brought to her and waste material removed by her attendants. Likewise, eggs (laid around the clock when the colony is expanding) are removed in small batches and taken to a Birthing Chamber to gestate and hatch. The Queen is usually so large, tired and laden down with her bloated, egg filled abdomen, that she hardly ever moves. Some Queens (Xiticix often have more than one) can not even leave their chamber once they reach full maturity because the entranceway to the chamber is too small.

Once the Queen makes eggs, the Workers and “Nannies” then move them to the Birthing Chambers where they are attended and protected until the proto-Xiticix inside are ready to emerge. All of the hive’s inhabitants are charged with protecting the Queens and the eggs, but only the Nannies, assisted by Workers/Drones, watch over the young on a daily basis. Warriors meander about the Birthing and Nursery Chambers, but they do not help — their sole purpose is to defend against any intruders or trouble. Likewise, the Queen is surrounded by servants, mostly Worker Drones and Nannies who care for and feed her. They too will fight to the death to protect the Queen, although the Nannies will first run to evacuate or hide any eggs or young. Each Queen also has a large contingent of Warriors and Hunters that remain in and outside her Chamber as protectors. Hundreds more are only seconds (1D4 melee rounds) away.

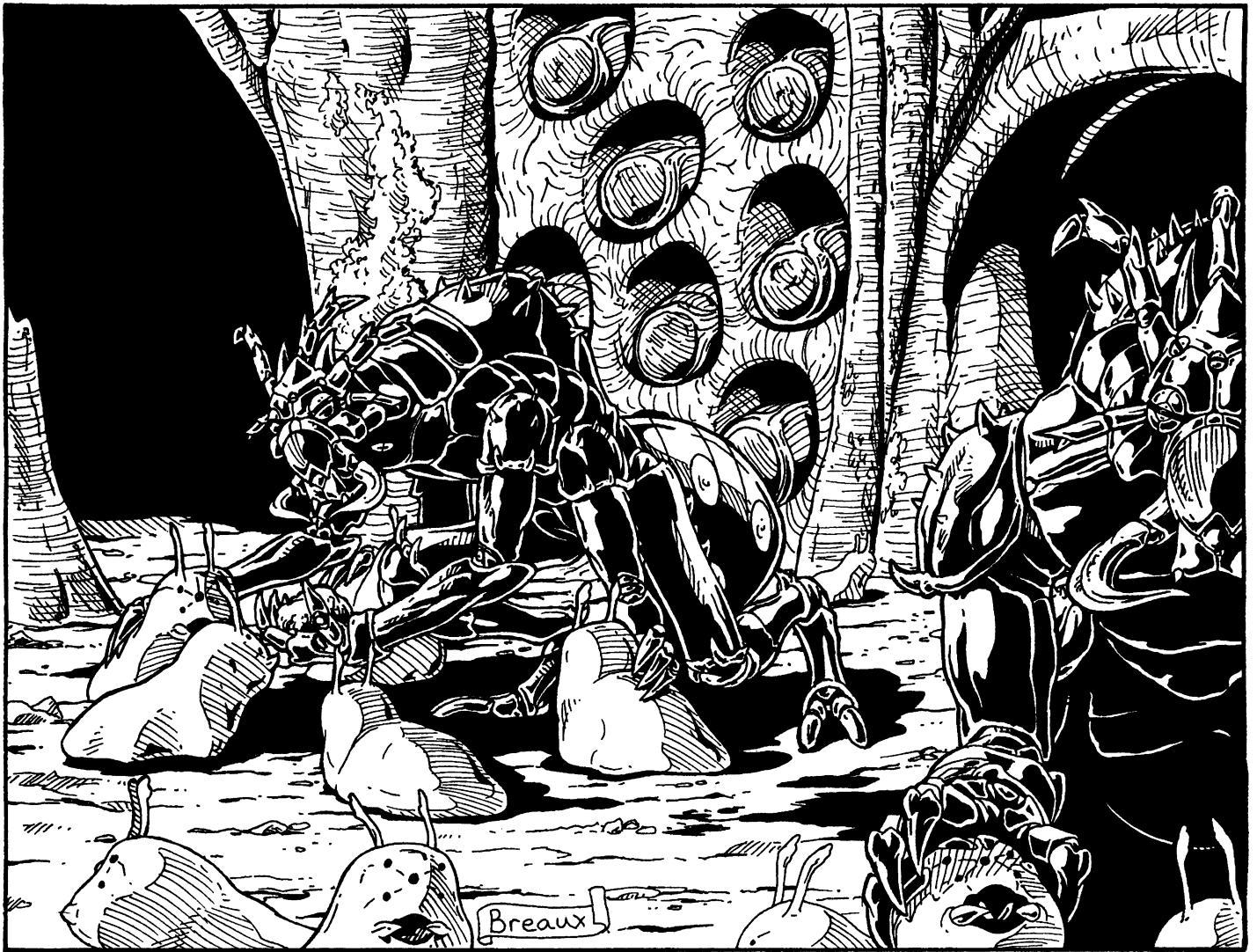
Xiticix Young

Even under times of fast growth, such as what’s being experienced on Rifts Earth, the eggs hatch after a three month gestation period. A milky white, rather amorphous Xiticix “nit” crawls out of the egg.

The nit is born in a large chamber with thousands of others. The young Xiticix is little more than a slug with a number of small beady eyes, ill-formed antennae, and no legs or arms. It will undergo two metamorphoses before reaching its final adult stage. Upon hatching, it is immediately attended to by the Nannies and any extra Workers drafted into service, and taken to a Nursery Chamber to grow.

The growing nits are fed a modified fungal substance. The Nannies produce this substance by ingesting the standard fungus that cakes the walls and ceilings of the hive, supplemented with the flesh and blood of live victims and converting their P.P.E. at the moment of death into a solid, storable medium. This special paste-like goo, or “Sludge” as many call it, is essentially concentrated nutrients and P.P.E. stored in a solid form. It is the infusion of magical energies via the use of “Sludge” that helps to turn the nits into M.D.C. adults (non-M.D.C. supernatural predators in S.D.C. environments; A.R. 16). It was once believed that the Xiticix could not turn into M.D.C. creatures without “Sludge,” but it has recently been discovered that “Sludge” is a special “baby formula” used to accelerate the growing process rather than being an essential part of the creature’s development. Without “Sludge” a nit grows and develops at a slower pace, taking roughly three to three and a half years to reach maturity.

The normal growth cycle of the Xiticix goes something like this. After three months the baby “nit” crawls from its egg. At the end of their first year after hatching, the nits grow larger, to about the size of a German Shepard, and develop a light, leathery



exoskeleton. They also begin to exhibit traits that represent their adult body and abilities, particularly in the development of the head and face. At this stage they are known as “Grubs.” It will be another eight months before the outline of wings or other features begin to form under the skin, and other changes begin to occur. For one, the grub doubles in size, and for another, it turns a dark color and the skin becomes more leathery. At the end of the second year, the large grub spins a cocoon where it undergoes an amazing transformation. Thirty days after entering into the pupa-cocoon state, a fully formed adult chews its way out of the chrysalis, eating it in its entirety as its first meal. Immediately after dining, the Xiticix is ready to begin performing duties around the hive.

Although this two year old looks very much like an adult, its color is significantly paler/lighter and the exoskeleton is not as hard or durable (30% less M.D.C.) as the mature adult of that species. Likewise, the youngster has less M.D.C. (roughly half that of an adult) and is 30% slower and weaker than the mature adult (adjust P.S., P.P., and Spd attributes appropriately; -1 on initiative due to uncertainty). Another twelve months must pass before the young adult reaches its full strength and M.D.C.

During this “transition period” the young adult stays in or near the Hive Network and watches and learns from the mature adults around it. Although its natural instincts provide it with most of what the insectoid needs to know, working with adults helps the creature to fit smoothly into Xiticix society, understand its place

and become self-confident and motivated. The young adult contributes to the work around the Hive, doing roughly half the work of a fully developed adult. Once this year-long training and development period ends, the three year old is as strong and capable as any adult and takes on all the normal responsibilities and tasks required of its species. For example, *young Diggers* might do repairs and clean-ups until strong enough to actually help construct anything or to dig out entire tunnels on their own. Likewise, Young Warriors will protect the less vital areas of the hive until they are strong and tough enough to guard important areas, outer perimeters, go on regular patrols or engage in full life and death combat. Young Warriors and Hunters rarely leave the hive or participate in hunts or patrols until they are completely mature. It isn’t until the end of the Xiticix’s third year that it is normally considered an adult. The entire process takes roughly 39-40 months from egg to mature adult.

“Sludge” somehow accelerates this growth process, producing a mature adult (i.e. equivalent three year old) in a year and a half (18 months). This helps to explain the Xiticix’s incredible population explosion. Scientists and scholars who have only learned about “Sludge” in the last year, suspect this is how the Xiticix colonize hostile, new territories, such as Rifts Earth, through nearly geometric doubling of their numbers on a year and a half cycle. Once the Xiticix have grown to sufficient numbers (presumably 60-100 million), the use of “Sludge” is probably stopped as the colony can safely grow under its normal rate.

The concept is simple: Survival through sheer weight of numbers. **Note:** Only Nannies and Queens can create “Sludge.”



Life Span & Growth of the Colony

The average life span of the Xiticix varies with its place within Xiticix society. For example, technically a Warrior can live to be 80 years old, but its service to the Hive as a fighter and defender means most do not live beyond the age of 25! Meanwhile, Workers and other Xiticix who rarely go into the outside world and avoid combat have an average life span of 65 (years of hard labor take their toll), with a handful living to be 80.

The longest lived of the Xiticix is the “Elder Queen.” This mistress of the Hive is the ultimate ruler and lives for up to 300 years! The “young” Queens, if lucky, can also live into their hundreds, however, while there are many young Queens, there can only be one **Elder Queen**. It is to the Elder Queen that all others are completely loyal, including the young Queens. When one of the lesser Queens can no longer be a useful part of society (i.e. can not give birth), she has lost her value to the hive and is quickly and mercifully slain, her carcass eaten and turned into Sludge.

The number of young Queens is dependent upon the needs of the Hive Community. Currently on Rifts Earth, there is a need for many Queens because the Xiticix population at each of the six Hive Networks must undergo rapid growth in an alien and hostile wilderness. Many Queens mean each of the Hives can quickly become a force of millions that can not be contained or destroyed. However, after the initial Hive reaches 300 million it

will divide in 1D6 additional “colonies” of roughly equal size (separate and independent Xiticix Hive Networks with their own Elder Queen and young Queens). The growth and expansion process will be repeated by each of the colonies, old and new, with the rapid birth and expansion continuing until each exceeds 200 million. At this point, the birthrate is dramatically reduced, and half the young Queens will be slain. They will not resist or protest as they, like all Xiticix, live to serve the Hive and the greater good of the colony. If they are no longer needed, then their work is done and they accept their demise.

Likewise, when an Elder Queen loses the ability to reproduce (somewhere around age $270+6D6$ years of age) or falls ill, she chooses the heir to her post. The two spend 48 hours together and then the old Queen is slain and the new one is acknowledged by all members of the colony as the new, Elder Queen. No human knows exactly how this selection is made, because age and experience do not seem to be an important factor. It seems any Queen over the age of fifty can be chosen.

If the Elder Queen dies unexpectedly, or is killed (a rarity), the Hive Network becomes as solemn as a tomb. All the Xiticix from that colony sense her death, regardless of where they may be, and return to stay inside the Hive Network. All work is temporarily suspended and it is as if they all mourn the loss of their Queen. During this period, the Xiticix take a position in the hive and simply stand there, sometimes weaving and humming softly to themselves. Without any apparent rhyme or reason, a new Elder mys-

teriously rises from the ranks of the other young Queens and takes her place as the ultimate ruler. This is done without debate or protest. All Xiticix, including the other Queens, seem to accept the new Elder Queen, and life in the hive returns to normal. **Note:** Under such dire circumstances, the new Elder Queen may be younger than fifty years old.

It is the Elder Queen who decides to create other lesser Queens for the good of the colony and who dictates their number. In the alternative, the Elder Queen may sense that a second, third or fourth hive colony is needed (as is the case on Rifts Earth). When this happens, she excretes a specific chemical that causes a handful of the developing nits to become new young Queens. Usually, one new Queen will develop in each of the Birthing Chambers within the hive. Depending on the level of expansion, there could be a dozen new young Queens born with every natural birth cycle and a hundred or more young Queens may inhabit and serve in a single, expansive colony. **Note:** In North America, the largest Duluth Hive is the progenitor of the other five. It has 92 young Queens who faithfully serve the Elder Queen who founded this hive on Earth — all Xiticix originate from this one source. The other, smaller hive colonies each have one Elder and 20+2D6 young Queens within their independent and separate Hive Networks. This number should double within the next year and quadruple over the next six. The five secondary colonies are only 4-6 years old. The main colony will hold strong at 92 Queens, but *may* continue to send young Queens and their “court” into the world to establish new colonies (the other five are too small and young to do this).

The Xiticix Queens instinctively know that to survive, the colony(s) must grow rapidly. Consequently, there are scores of young Queens laying eggs to spawn legion after legion of Xiticix. The population boom will provide the support needed by the new young Queens to expand their respective hives, providing safety and strength in numbers. All members of each independent colony work together and faithfully serve the Elder Queen without hesitation or question. At least this is how it works when the Xiticix are effectively invading a new region, as is the case of Rifts Earth which offers an entire world to inhabit.

A different way — life on the Xiticix homeworld

The Xiticix species instinctively works to force out most other life forms and become the dominant species on that world. Once this is accomplished, there are no rival beings and little room for expansion. When this point is reached, their life style undergoes a dramatic change that turns them against their own kind. This change is not as dependent on the size of the population, as it is on available space and resources. When there is little room for unchallenged expansion, the largest hives splinter into six independent and rival factions, each roughly the same size. To grow/expand, a particular Xiticix colony must invade and conquer a rival’s hive or part of a Hive Network, forcing that colony to retreat or to battle until completely destroyed (which is often the case). These battles can be horrendous, with both sides killing millions. The winner takes over the loser’s hive, while any survivors must try to establish a new, smaller hive elsewhere or be destroyed by the larger rivals.

Under such overcrowded and competitive conditions, most if not all of the young Queens are slain, leaving only the Elder Queen to create a comparative trickle of new Xiticix into the population (about 30,000 to 50,000 a year which typically keeps pace

with the rate of attrition; young Queens lay about half this amount until one becomes the true Elder and matriarch of the colony. Even then, the Elder Queen can not achieve this rate until she reaches 50 years of age).

Rivalry among the different colonies is extremely high and there is even competition *within* each of the colonies themselves. For example, upon reaching their second year, 25% of the Nursery Chambers (there are typically two per Queen; only 4-8 Nurseries if there is just one Elder Queen in a large colony), will produce a young Queen. When she is born she will have an entourage of at least one pair of nannies (two to three times that number are more common), a dozen Diggers and a like amount of Workers, and almost three dozen Warriors all loyal to her (typically from grubs born in the same cycle and located near her). These minions or the “Queen’s Court,” as they are sometimes called, are loyal to the young Queen, not the Elder of the hive that spawned them.

These sub-groups within the colony are independent of the Elder Queen and each of these non-aligned, new Queen “courts” are allowed to go free with their Queen to try to form a new hive of their own. Typically, after leaving their birth hive, each prospective young Queen and her entourage will battle the other young Queens and their courts until there is only one winner — survival of the fittest. The survivors of each group that loses their young Queen (it is their job to protect her) are completely destroyed by their rivals. There is no assimilation of any survivors, except for the occasional Nanny. Nannies will sometimes be captured and assimilated because of their important role in the growth of the new hive colony. This same process occurs when a new Hive Network (like the ones on Rifts Earth) approaches or exceeds the 200 million population mark. In this case, the young Queens may battle but because there currently is ample room for expansion, as many as a third will avoid such conflict and simply go away to start a new colony in an unchallenged space. However, such new hives are likely to be 300-500 miles (482-800 km) or farther away from the hive that spawned them. **Note:** This has yet to happen on Rifts Earth. The five that have grown from the original hive were created as a direct choice of that colony’s Elder Queen. While all six see each other as independent and potential rivals, there is so much space that there is no need for them to fight.

Once the new hive is established, the survivors go into overdrive. The Diggers build as fast as they can to produce resin, the Queen lays eggs constantly, and the Nannies stockpile “Sludge” for the prospective brood of new nits. Warriors will secure territory, though minor at first, and stand vigilant over the construction of their new home. The whole time, necessary structures are quickly built and fortified. Once the basic needs of the colony are met, the Xiticix settle in and wait for their first grouping of eggs to grow and mature. During that waiting period, the Drones often have to double as Warriors until the first of the young become mature enough to add some weight to the colony’s defenses. The population of Xiticix colonies increase at an alarming rate, often near geometric levels on an annual basis. This super-growth typically lasts for about the first 20-30 years before it starts to slow down to about a 50% annual increase. After 200 million are part of the colony, the growth rate usually slows down to about a 15-25% annual increase.

The first five years are the hardest for the fledgling colony. The scents of the individuals belonging to a new colony quickly



comes at a terrible price, as these Xiticix will enter into a lifelong antipathy and deadly antagonism with all other independent colonies. The older and significantly larger colonies often target them within the first five years, with less than half growing to become a major new force, and in an overcrowded environment, less than one percent will survive beyond that period. However, a new hive that manages to grow large often becomes incredibly aggressive and can destroy and conquer old colonies, becoming (at least for a few decades) one of the new dominant powers.

Alternatively, instead of going out into the world to find her destiny, sometimes a new Queen will refuse to leave the hive of her birth. The problem is, older, established colonies only need *one* Elder Queen (and no or only a couple of young Queens). This means to stay, she and her immature entourage (30% weaker than fully developed adults) go into the Elder Queen's Chamber and challenge her for domination (no Xiticix will stop this War of the Queens and the young one is allowed to enter the Queen's Chamber without fear of attack). Here she and her troupe engage in a battle to the death with the Elder Queen and her group of chamber attendants and defenders. The rest of the colony does not join either side, but waits for the outcome.

The young Queen will make an attempt to destroy the Elder while each of the two Queens' minions battle one another. Since the young ones are weaker than the mature adults they are attacking, and since the sides are usually equally matched in numbers, the superior strength, greater M.D.C. and experience of the adults and Elder Queen usually win out, resulting in the death of all challengers'. That having been said, occasionally the usurper is successful in her bid for power. When this happens, the members of the established colony immediately accept her as the new, Elder Queen. She will move smoothly into that role and take the place of her predecessor without incident from the rest of the colony. However, another young Queen (there are usually 2D4 born at the same time) may chose to attack her, with only the newly appointed Queen's battered entourage to battle the new challengers. Sometimes, a half dozen young Queens ascend to power within the span of a week or two before one can finally hold the position. It is interesting to note that if the attempt of the first young Queen fails against the Elder, none of the other young Queens will challenge the old matriarch, and go out into the world to try to start their own colonies.

In another instance, if the Elder Queen in an existing hive is killed, dies, or can no longer perform her duties as "the" Queen, a new, young Queen will take her place. If none are ready to hatch, 1D4 will automatically begin to develop among the grubs. This is likely to be the result of the hive "collective" duplicating en masse the chemical which causes new Queens to develop, or some other chain of events that is beyond human understanding. Regardless of the source of the stimuli, 1-4 of the existing grubs begin to change. In this case, a partially developed grub can shift its physiology and grow to become a Queen, possibly resulting in a Queen that resembles another type of Xiticix, even if only superficially (such as one which began as a Hunter having a green exoskeleton rather than the usual color for a Queen). Due to the emergency nature of such transformations, the newly developed Queen undergoes an accelerated growth cycle and can reach maturity within six months after the old Queen's death. This kind of Queen tends to be more violent and aggressive than those that mature naturally, a fact that may explain why certain hives engage in more frequent raids against rivals and enemies

changes from those where they originated, forever marking them as an independent and separate colony. However, independence

than others. It can also explain a radical and unexplained change in the patterns or habits of an existing colony.

Xiticix Territory

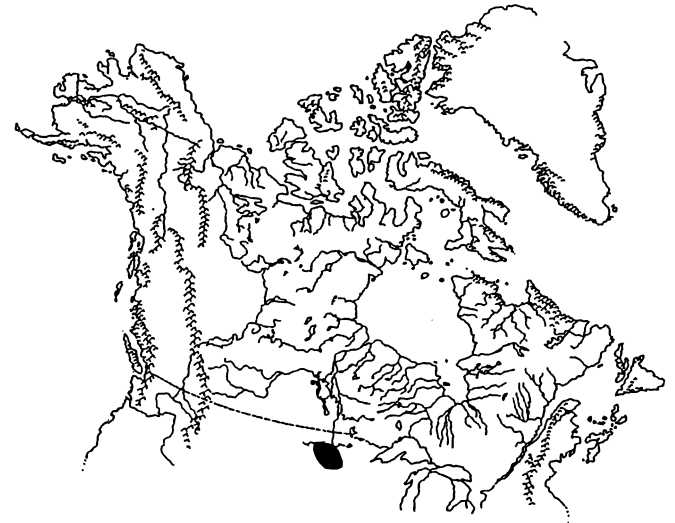


nate the entire northeastern corner of Minnesota with increasingly frequent incursions into southwestern Ontario and western Lake Superior. It seems clear to most knowledgeable observers that this hive intends to expand southwest toward *Park Rapids* and north into Ontario.

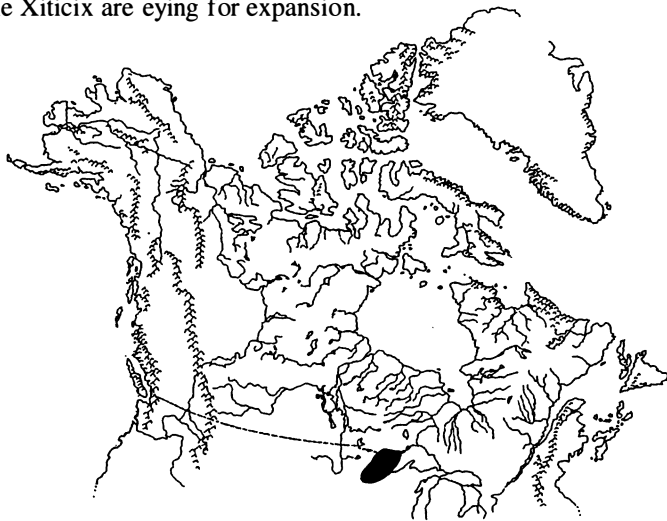
The Xiticix Hives

1. Duluth, Minnesota (Central Hive)
2. Fargo, North Dakota
3. Rolla-Morden, Manitoba & North Dakota
4. Winnipeg, Manitoba
5. Crookston, Minnesota
6. Big Falls, Minnesota

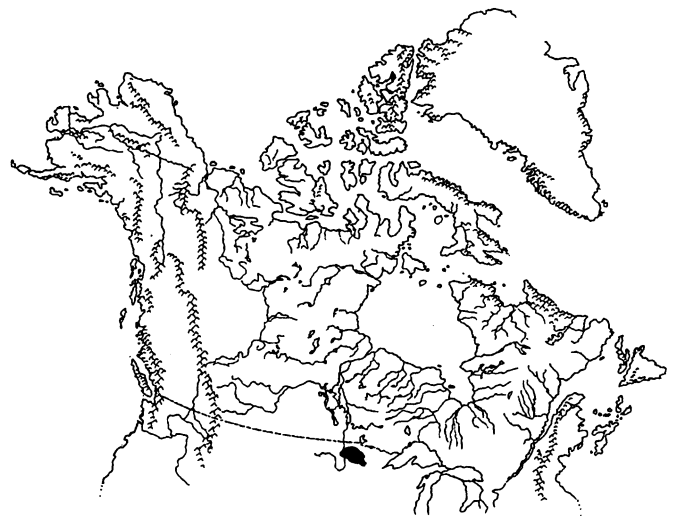
There are six Xiticix hives known to exist in North America, however, there are numerous locations around these places where a hive *outpost* can be found — 1D4 short towers with 1D6x10+40 Warriors and 5D6 other fighting class Xiticix; no subterranean network and rarely taller than six stories. Many people fear these are potential sites for new colonies, but they are not. An outpost tower is a field base that appears here and there along the Xiticix's territorial border and sometimes into territory the Xiticix are eying for expansion.



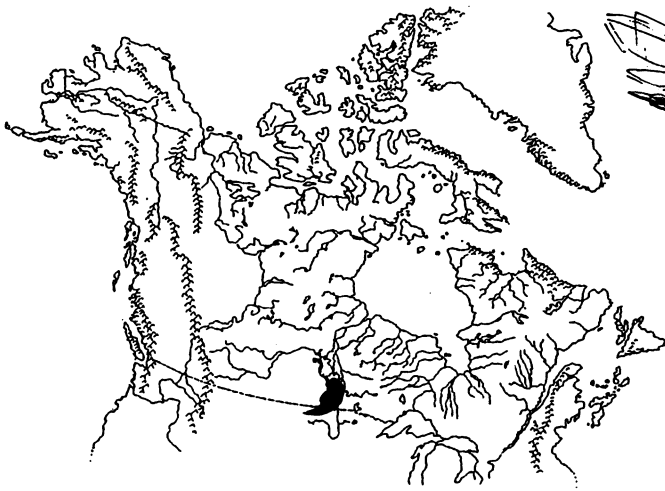
The Fargo Hive is actually the second to appear and dominates the area from the pre-Rifts cities of **Fargo** toward *Grand Forks* and *New Rockford*. Its size and growth has been somewhat curtailed by rivalry between it and the **Crookston Hive** in Minnesota (one of the newer hives). These two are constantly fighting over the Fargo Hive's northern border near *Grand Forks*. The two colonies are easy to distinguish because Fargo's towers are the traditional mushroom shape, while the Crookston Hive has the more insect-like towers with the bulb shaped top.



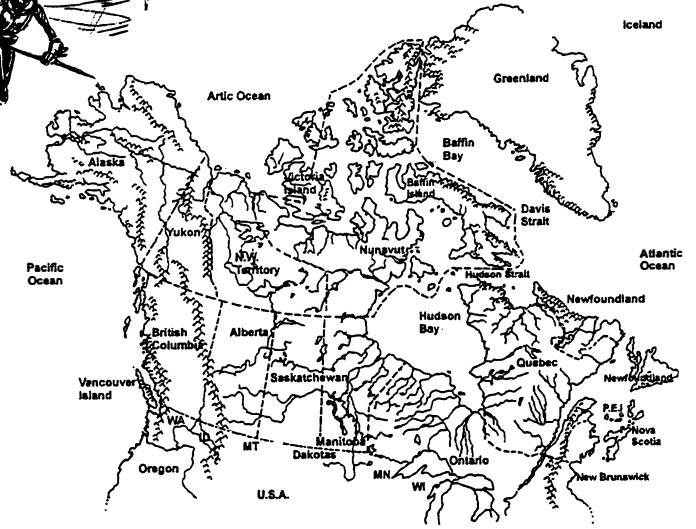
The largest and oldest of the Xiticix Hive Networks is the **Duluth Hive**. It gets its name from the fact that the hive originated on the ruins of the old harbor city of Duluth, Minnesota; all the other Hive Colonies originated from it. These Xiticix domi-



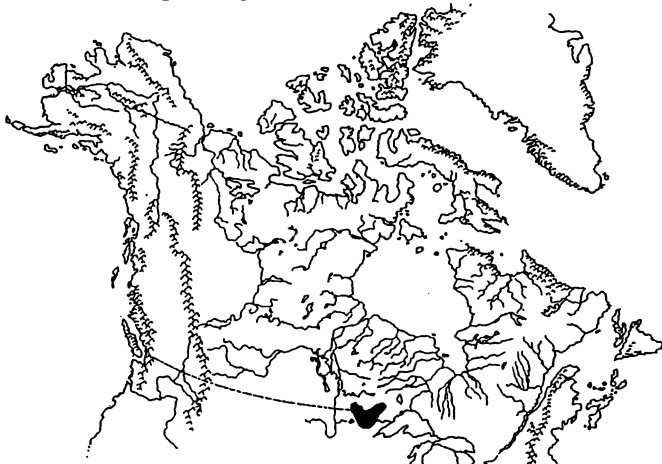
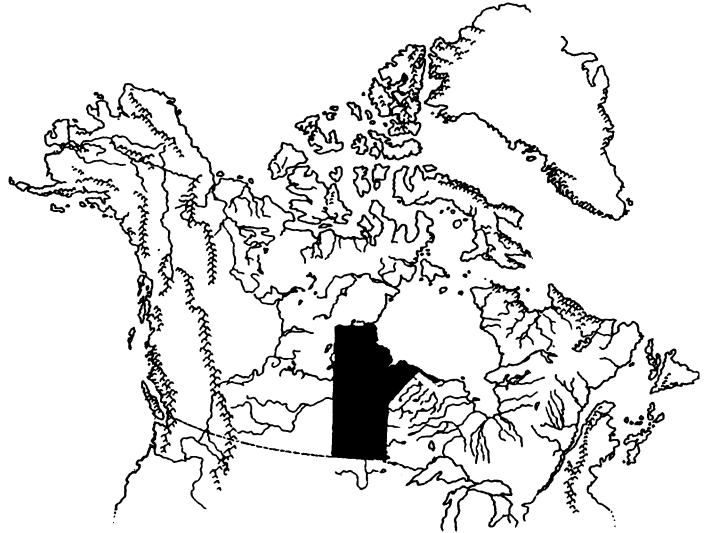
The Crookston Hive



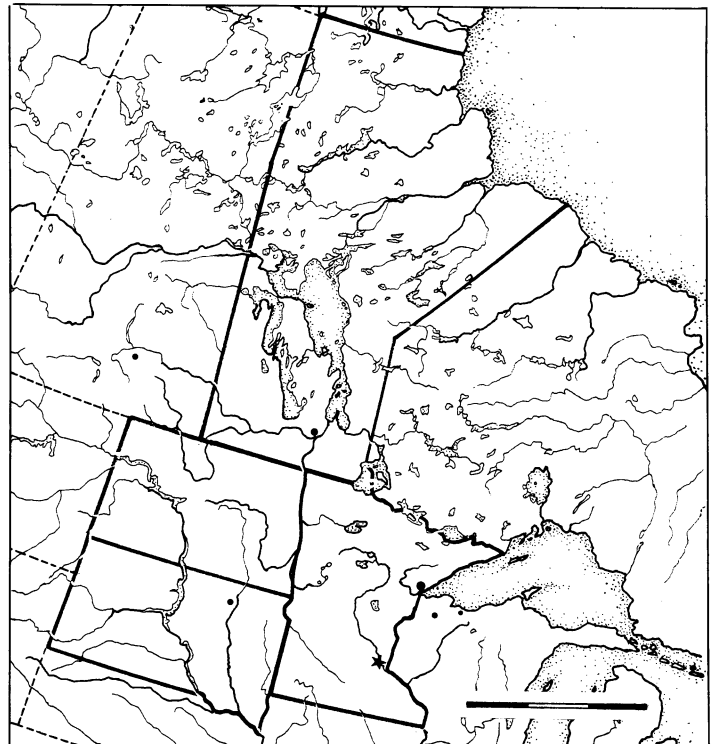
The Rolla-Morden Hive, as the name suggests, stretches from the pre-Rifts cities of Rolla, curling toward Minot, North Dakota up into Canada from Morden, Manitoba, northeast toward Winnipeg.



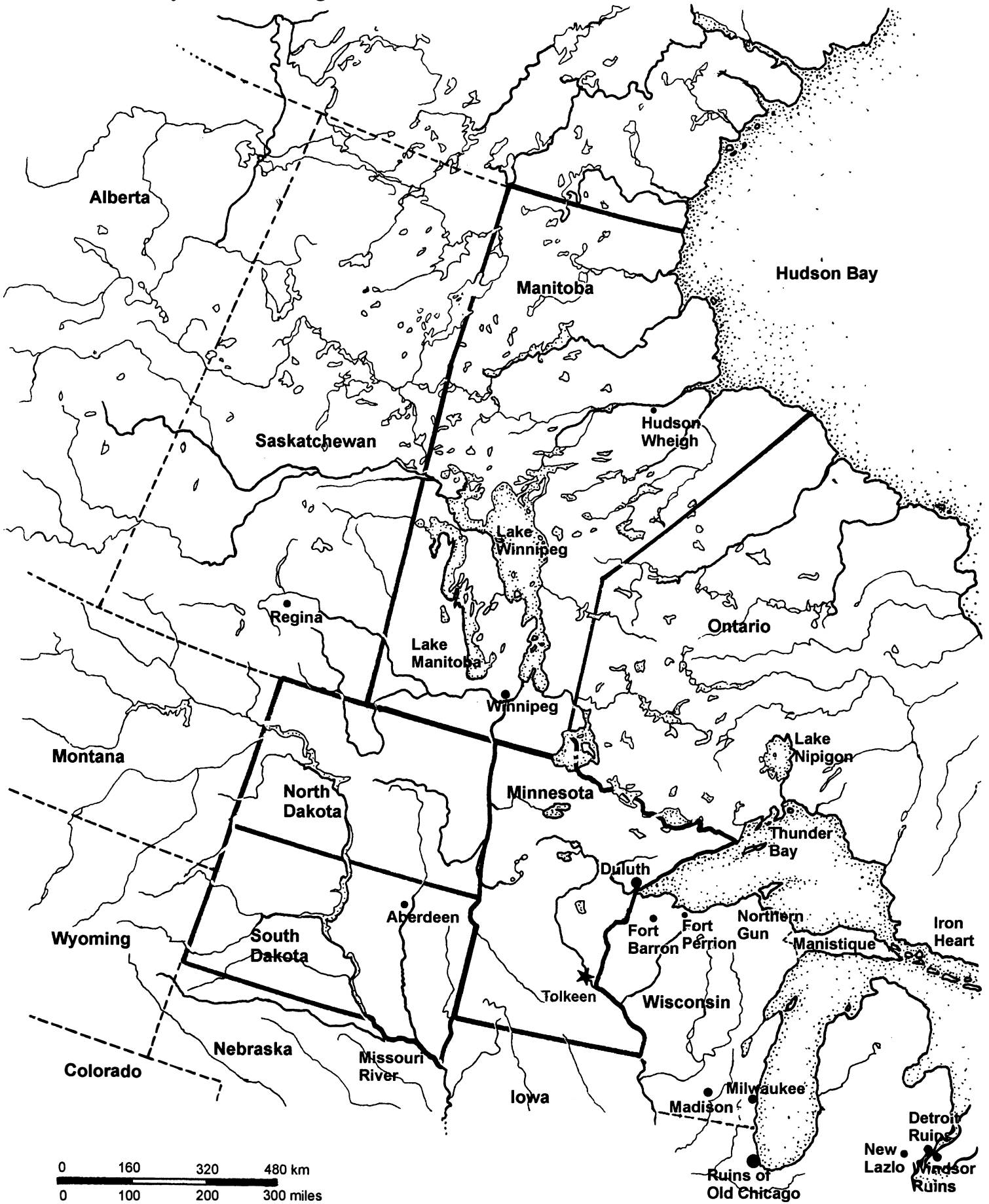
The Winnipeg Hive, Manitoba, stretches eastwardly toward Ontario and north near the ruins of *Pine Falls*. Despite their close proximity to one another, there has been no conflict between the Rolla-Morden Hive and the Winnipeg. This is probably due to the fact that Rolla-Morden can expand west and north, while the Winnipeg Hive can press north and northeast. In fact, if there's going to be a clash, it will come between Winnipeg and the **Big Falls Hive**, both pressing into southwestern Ontario, Canada.



The Big Falls, Minnesota Hive is the smallest and most recent Hive Colony with its center located where the pre-Rifts town of *Big Falls* once stood. Expansion plans are south toward *Park Rapids* and north into *Ontario*. Big Falls builds the more insect-like hive towers.



Xitcix Territory & Surrounding Areas





Typical Xiticix Tower

Each Xiticix colony will have slightly different styles to their tower-like buildings. All have a rather mushroom-like appearance with some having large caps, others small, and still others (about half) with a more insect mound look, with a bulbous cap or crown and jutting ledges or platforms. Bridges are used to connect 20-30% of the towers, but considering that most Xiticix can fly, this is not a necessity.

For purpose of example, the Hive Complex presented here is comparatively small.

1. The Cap. The top of the Xiticix tower, whether it is mushroom or bulb-shaped, is always the living quarters for Warriors, and only Warriors — and their Super-Warrior commander (typically one for every 200-400 Warriors). Depending on the size of the building and the cap, it can accommodate 240-500 Warriors, with another couple hundred scattered throughout the length of the tower and 1,000-1,600 near the base. This does not include those living in the subterranean tunnels of the main hive or scattered about outside.

There are no windows, doorways or openings of any kind in the 2-3 story cap section. To go outdoors there are a half dozen to a dozen vertical shafts that lead to the floor below them. From this floor the Warriors can continue to drop down, to the levels, and ultimately the tunnels, below or out the 3-8 wide openings. **Note:** The strategic reasons for having so many Warriors living at the top of the tower, with another batch near the bottom, is two-fold: 1) quick response, and 2) a squeeze play. In times of trouble, the defenders of the hive can rush down from the top and up from the bottom and quickly exit to address the danger. Likewise, if the tower is invaded, Warriors can quickly surround them with Xiticix coming from the top, bottom and sides. In the latter case, Warriors from the top and bottom exit to quickly reenter from one of the side portals. Meanwhile, defenders from other towers, alerted by the sounds and smells of combat, can take to the skies in search of more trouble and/or to attack those trying to escape.

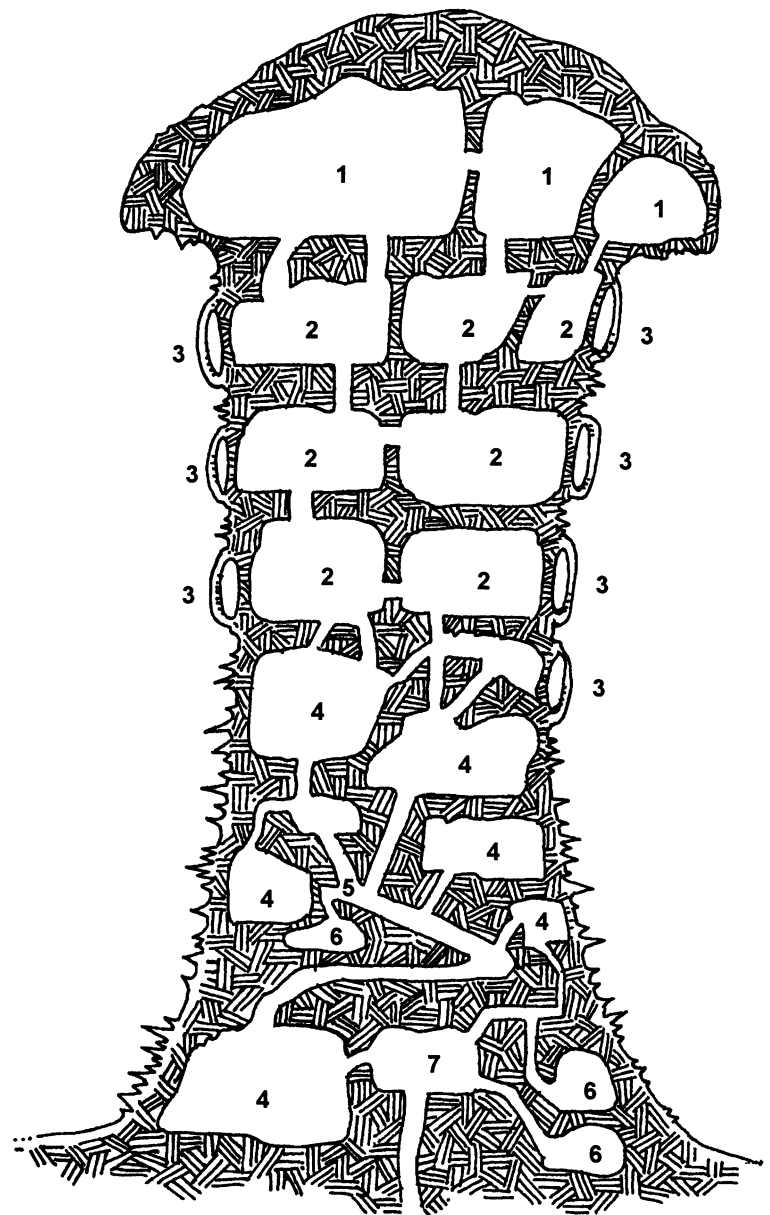
2. The transit levels. The next 3-7 floors from roughly a third of the way from the bottom to the top cap are transit levels. Each floor consists of 2-4 wide, open chambers in which departing and arriving Xiticix can freely exit, enter and gather.

From these floors there will be 3-6 circular or oval portals leading outside. Each is large enough to allow 3-9 Xiticix Warriors to exit simultaneously. Thus, they can swarm from the openings like angry hornets and mass by the hundreds within two melee rounds (30 seconds), and by the thousands in a matter of minutes.

During the normal course of the day, Xiticix, mostly Warriors and Hunters, come and go constantly. Those exiting immediately swing upward when flying away, while those returning to the hive fly in low and straight. This avoids midair collisions and confusion, and is done instinctively.

Of course, since Xiticix can easily climb the outer (and interior) walls of the towers, they do not have to “fly” away at all, but skitter up, down or sideways along the walls of the tower. This is accomplished as easily as a human trots up or down a ramp or stairwell. In fact, Warriors, Hunters, and Leapers (occasionally a Super-Warrior, Worker or Digger) are frequently seen sitting, seemingly stuck to the side of a tower or perched on a ledge or large defensive spike.

Note: The Xiticix ability to scale walls like genuine Earth insects means there are no stairs or ropes. Even ramps and bridges are fairly uncommon. Thus humanoid invaders need to come equipped with rope and climbing gear, for they can expect to find steep diagonal tunnels, sloping ramps and vertical shafts (convenient passageways for the Xiticix) dropping straight down or shooting straight up, as the case may be. This unique, insect architecture makes travel by humans and other ground creatures slow and treacherous, and makes them easy targets for the fast and deadly wall-crawlers. Additionally, bipedal invaders must remember to look up to the walls and ceilings for potential adversaries as well as down for vertical passageways which could inadvertently become pit-traps. Falling down an unexpected hole in the floor can result in more than injured pride. Many of these shafts go down 20-40 feet (6-12.2 m) and even a short, 10 foot (3 m) shaft can result in a sprained or broken ankle, leg or arm. Even if injury is minimal, the sound of the fall is almost certain to bring 1D6 Xiticix to come and investigate; typically Warriors or Workers.



3. Exit Portals. The way in and out of the Xiticix towers is through a, typically, large opening in the outer wall, usually circular or oval in shape. A few, about 20%, are comparatively small, only big enough to let one or two Xiticix exit at a time, but most are large enough to let 3-6 in or out simultaneously. Many have spikes beneath the lip of the opening to make entry more difficult for humans and other ground crawling creatures.

4. Lower Habitats. The lower third of the tower is where more living chambers are located, as well as the, often twisting, passageways and vertical drops to the subterranean tunnel network.

The majority of these living areas house 1,000 to 1,600 Xiticix Warriors with another 100-400 Workers and the occasional Hunter, Leaper, Worker and Digger. The lower one goes, the closer one gets to the main hive.

5. Tunnel Maze Down. The lower into the base one goes, the fewer large chambers there are and the more tunnels. Some go down at an angle, some drop straight down, some are horizontal and some go up (and then down?). They are deliberately designed to be confusing to outsiders and can lead back up and out, to living chambers, traps, dead ends, or down into the bowels of the Hive Network. Even a Xiticix might get lost if not for their ability to leave and follow Scent Trails. Thus, most Xiticix know exactly where to go even if they have not ever visited that particular tower or part of the hive.

6. Dead End. Tunnels frequently lead to small empty chambers. Some are deliberate traps meant to mislead and trap intruders, while others are used for storage or sleeping.

7. Tunnel Vestibule. This is usually a small to medium-sized chamber that can be accessed from two or three different directions, but only after dealing with a maze of tunnels and dead ends. Someplace in the floor will be a vertical or sloping shaft that leads to the first level of the subterranean Hive Network.

As a rule, the underground section of the hive weaves and snakes under the floor of the surface towers. Each tower eventually connects to a tunnel or shaft going down into the main hive. The subterranean hive is a mass of seemingly unorganized tunnels and chambers. As much as 25-40% may appear to be uninhabited, but when a main living area is found, the Xiticix are encountered in droves, by the hundreds to thousands to millions!



The first level is usually 60-80 feet (18.3 to 24.4 m) down and tends to be little more than access tunnels from the towers to the subterranean complex below. Since most every tower has an access tunnel going down, there are scores of ways up and into one of the towers above. Going deeper down into the lower levels, however, there are only 10-20% as many, preventing easy access to invaders.

Level One is mostly a maze of tunnels with comparatively few chambers or living areas. Other than Xiticix coming and going (mainly Warriors and Workers), there is little traffic and few living areas.

The second and third levels are typically the main living areas. Here is where intruders will find thousands of Workers (60%) as well as some Warriors (about 20%) and the other Xiticix (20%) scattered in the mix — i.e. Diggers, Nannies, Hunters, Leapers and the occasional Young Queen.

Level Four. The key areas and personnel are usually found toward the bottom. It is on level four that the Nannies, Diggers and majority of the young Queens (80%-90%) are found. Workers represent the largest segment (30%), Nannies the next (25%), Warriors the third (20%; includes one Super-Warrior for every 200-500 Warriors) and the rest (typically 10% Diggers, 8% Hunters, 7% Leapers). This is also where one finds the many Egg and Nursery chambers. **Note:** Water Chambers and storage areas are also usually found on the fourth (and to a lesser degree, third) level.

Level Five, the Elder Queen. The deepest level is typically the smallest section of the Xiticix Labyrinth. Other than Egg Chambers, Nurseries, a small Water Chamber, a few storage

Typical Xiticix Tunnel Network

The following is a rudimentary layout for a typical Hive Network. This map shows the vertical levels of the hive, but the network also goes horizontal with long, weaving tunnels and chambers.

The top level or surface level is composed of the city of towers.

Entrance to the underground part of the complex is through the towers. Invaders may also choose to “dig” their own tunnel, although hitting one of the spread out Xiticix tunnels is very much a hit and miss proposition unless one knows where to dig.

areas, and the Queen's Chamber, there is nothing else on this level. The Elder Queen's Chamber is typically a cavernous room the size of a football stadium with a ceiling that is 50-80 feet (15.2 to 24.4 m) high.

Notes:

- The "typical" Xiticix Hive Network has five levels, but some have four or six instead (very uncommon). Likewise, sometimes the Elder Queen's Chamber is located on the fourth level, although it is usually a bit isolated from the main hub of the hive.
- The exact number of Xiticix present in any given area may vary from hive to hive by 50%, up or down, depending on the design of the hive, how sprawling or condensed it might be and the overall population. Some are crowded while others are comparatively spread out and sparsely populated.
- At least one Hunter or Super-Warrior is usually found leading a group with more than 20 Xiticix Warriors.
- Xiticix are constantly modifying, changing and rebuilding the Hive Network as it grows and expands. This means old or rarely used tunnels and chambers may be collapsed, filled in and new ones created. Xiticix never "abandon" a section of the hive except under extraordinary circumstances. If it's not used, it is closed down and filled up. Thus, if a tunnel or chamber exists, it is used on at least a semi-regular basis or serves some purpose.

Description & Layout of a Typical Xiticix Hive Network

Level One: The Access Level

1. **A network of tunnels**, broken by the occasional shallow chamber/gathering place, that leads to the lower levels.

2. **Gathering place** that can also be used by Xiticix Warriors as a living chamber. This is a main avenue for entering the lower levels of the hive and is often inhabited by a cadre of guardians who never leave this chamber: 6D6 Xiticix Warriors and 2D6 Leapers. There is also a 01-50% chance of one Super-Warrior being among these residents. If not, there will be one or two Hunters who serve as the group's leaders.

3. **Living area** typically inhabited by 4D6 Warriors. An access tunnel to the east branches up, over and down to the second and third level. A second, smaller tunnel branches to the west where it connects to a vertical shaft that leads to the next level. The tunnel that branches back to the east is a dead end.

4. **Meeting place or storage room.** 01-90% likelihood of being empty and unoccupied. If occupied, there will only be 1D6 Xiticix, probably Workers.

5. **Meeting place** and a main thoroughfare down. 01-50% likelihood of being unoccupied.

Level Two: Living Areas

6. **Living Area.** At least 6D6x10 Xiticix are present at any given time; mostly Warriors (70%), Leapers (10%), Hunters (8%), a few Super-Warriors (2%), and Workers (10%).

The east tunnel slopes down to a cluster of small tunnels. The two tunnels to the east lead to the same chamber, a place that is 01-60% likely to be empty, but could contain any of the following (if 61-00 is rolled, roll percentile dice again with the following results):

01-20% 1D4 sleeping Diggers. If left undisturbed, they will continue to sleep soundly. If awakened, the Digger(s) will eye intruders for a moment and release the Chemical Alarm, but will not attack unless threatened. If the creature is attacked, it will release the chemical alarm (counts as one melee action) and engage the enemy.

The sound of combat and alarm scent will bring 1D4 squads of Warriors (2D6+2 per each squad) to investigate. They immediately take over the battle with intruders allowing the Digger to either continue to fight or exit.

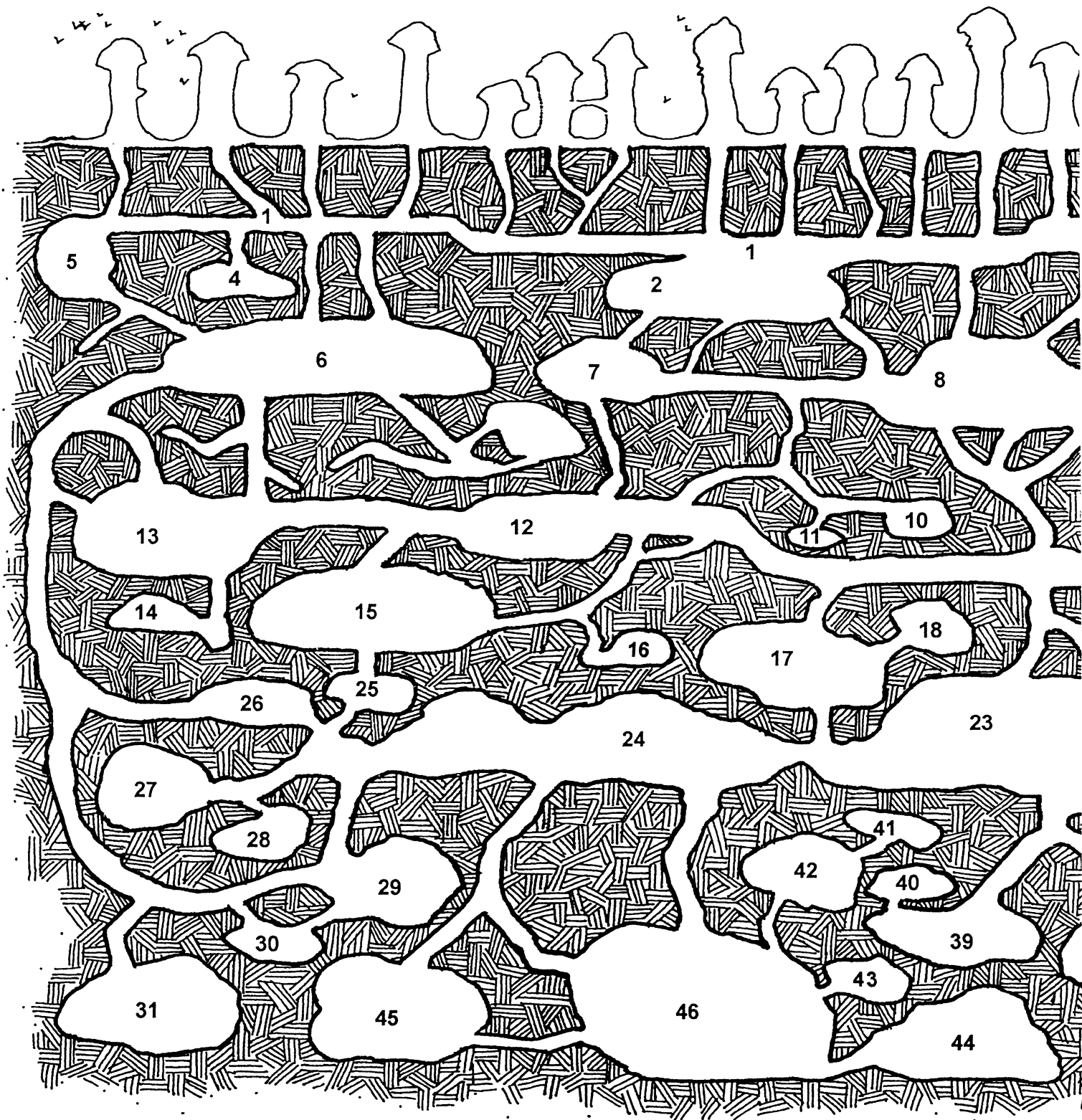
21-40% 1D6+4 resting Warriors. They immediately attack any intruder(s) and will fight to the death. However, they will not release the Chemical Alarm until half their numbers are slain. This means if the invader(s) can quickly *incapacitate* (via magic or psionics, perhaps) the Warriors within the first six melee rounds, the creatures will be caught off guard and defeated before any alarm is unleashed. However, killing them will release the Death Scent that will rise up to level one and down to level three.

41-60% 1D4+1 resting Leapers or Hunters or a 50/50 mixed group. Basically the same scenario as 21-40% above.

61-00% 1D6+6 Workers. They regard intruders with indifference and ignore them unless the characters all enter the room or threaten them. At that point the Workers will release the Chemical Alarm, but even then they fight only if attacked first (or if a Warrior or Xiticix in authority appears and commands them to do so).

7. **Open chamber and tunnel junction.** 01-60% chance of being empty/deserted. If occupied, there will be 4D6 Xiticix, probably Workers (01-80%) or Warriors (81-95%). Only a small





chance (96-00%) of other Xiticix being at this junction.

8. Living Chamber. 3D4x100 Xiticix present at any given time; mostly Workers (95%) along with a few others (5%; mixed group).

Level Three: Main Living Area

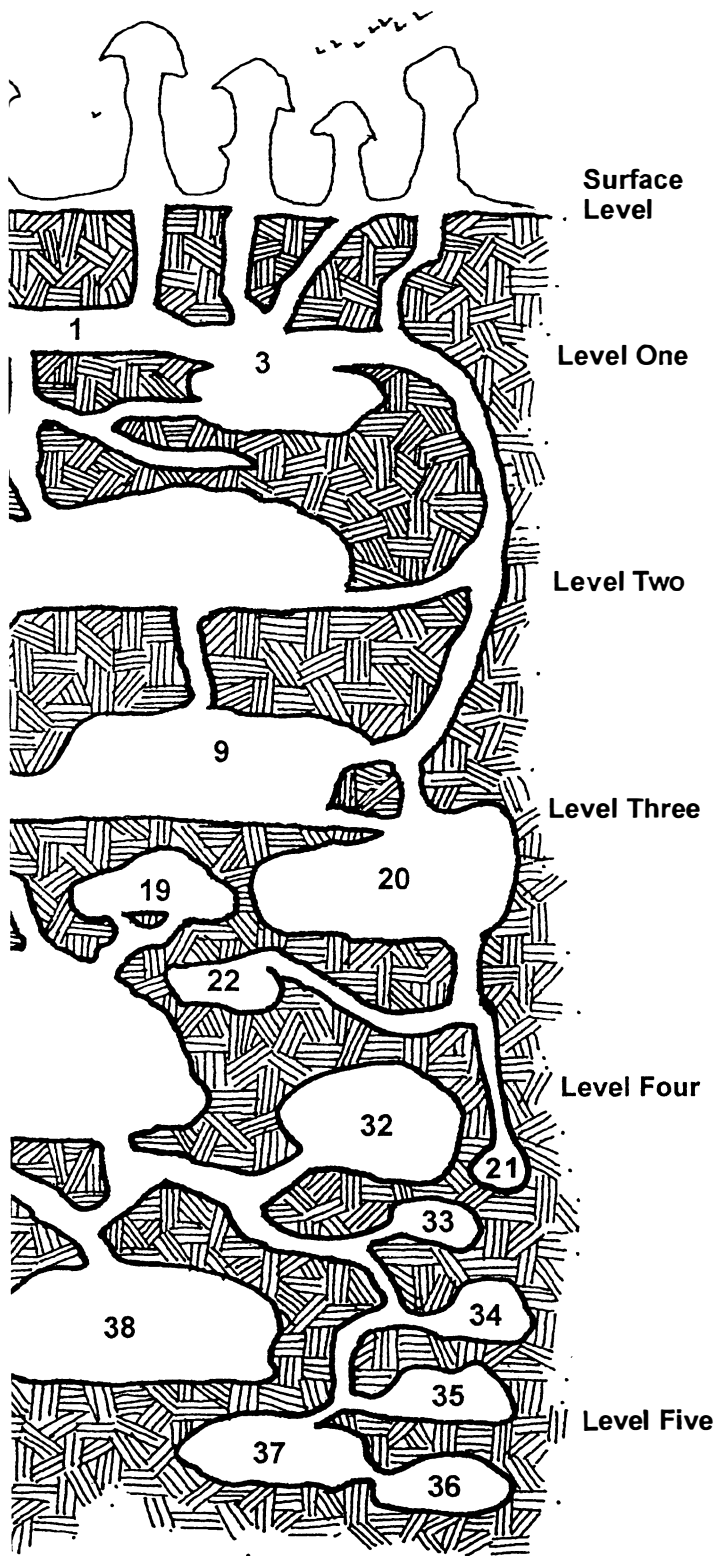
9. Living Chamber. Typically 2D4x100 Workers present at any given time.

10. Isolated living area. Typically for Hunters or Leapers; 4D6 present at any given time.

11. Small storage area. 01-95% likelihood of being uninhabited. If occupied, there will only be 1D4 Xiticix, probably Workers.

12. Meeting hall/gathering place. 1-50% chance of being empty/deserted. If occupied, there will be 2D6 Xiticix, probably Workers (01-80%) or Warriors (81-95%). There is only a small chance (96-00%) that some other Xiticix are present; never a Queen.

13. Living Chamber. Typically 1D4x100 Workers present at any given time.



14. Small storage chamber. 01-90% chance of being empty/deserted. If occupied, there will only be 1D4 Xiticix, probably Workers.

15. Living Area. 01-75% chance of being empty; used as needed. May also be used for storage. If occupied, there will be 3D6 Xiticix, probably Workers (01-80%) or Warriors (81-95%). There is only a small chance (96-00%) that some other Xiticix are present; never a Queen.

16. Small storage chamber or Egg Chamber. 01-95% likelihood of being uninhabited if a storage chamber, but a small Egg

Chamber will have 1D4+2 Nannies and 1D6+6 Workers taking care of and defending the eggs.

17. Chamber of a young Queen. Includes her standard set of guards and entourage.

Elite Guards: 1D6+6 Warriors, 1D4+2 Hunters, 1D4 Leapers and one Super-Warrior.

If a young Queen is threatened, she and her defenders will call for additional help via telepathy and chemical alarms. Nearby Nannies and/or the Workers under their command will arrive to help within one melee round (15 seconds). One Super-Warrior, 3D6 Warriors and 1D6 Hunters and/or Leapers will arrive within two melee rounds (30 seconds). 1D4x10 additional Warriors will arrive approximately every minute (four melee rounds) until the enemy is defeated, the danger is over, and the warning is called off.

Attendants: 1D6+6 Workers and 1D4 Nannies who attend to all the Queen's other needs; double to triple during periods when the Queen is giving birth.

18. Nursery Chamber. A busy place inhabited by at least 2D6+20 Nannies and at least one (if not two) Worker for every Nanny. 3D6x100 nits or grubs are contained inside.

19. Isolated living area for Super-Warriors or Hunters. As many as 6D6 may be present.

20. Living Chamber for Diggers (80%) and Workers (20%). As many as 1D4x100 may be present at any given time.

21. Small Water Chamber — drinking water.

22. Small Chamber to be used as needed. Probably storage or living area.

Level Four: Hive Center & Main Living Area

23. Living Chamber. 3D6x100+60 Xiticix present at any given time. Mostly Diggers (50%), Nannies (25%), Workers (22%) and others (3%).

24. Living Chamber. 2D6x100 Xiticix present at any given time. Mostly Workers (80%), Warriors (10%), and others (10%).

25. Storage or Egg Chamber. 01-80% likelihood of being uninhabited if used as a storage chamber. If occupied, there will only be 1D4 Xiticix, probably Workers (01-60%) or Nannies (61-00). If used as a medium-sized Egg Chamber, it will have 1D6+6 Nannies and two or three Workers for every one Nanny taking care of and defending the eggs.

26. Meeting area/gathering place.

01-60% chance that it is empty.

61-75% chance that it holds 2D6+2 Workers.

76-85% chance that it holds 1D6 Diggers.

86-90% chance that 1D6+1 Nannies are present.

91-95% chance of 1D6+2 Warriors being present.

96-00% chance that there is a mixed group of 3D6 Xiticix (40% Workers, 35% Warriors, 25% others with at least one Super-Warrior or two Diggers present).

27. Nursery (Medium). Inhabited by at least 1D6x100 Nannies and at least one (if not two) Worker for every Nanny. 2D4x1000 nits or grubs are contained inside. Five percent of the space is used to store Sludge.

28. Young Queen's Chamber. Includes her standard set of guards and entourage. See #17 (and/or the Queen R.C.C.) for details.

29. Nursery (Medium). A bustling place inhabited by at 1D6x100 Nannies and two Workers for every Nanny. 2D4x1000

nits or grubs are contained inside. Five percent of the space is used to store Sludge.

30. Young Queen's Chamber. Includes her standard set of guards and entourage. See #17 (and/or the Queen R.C.C.) for details.

31. Nursery (Large). A busy place inhabited by at least 3D4x100 Nannies and two Workers for every one of them. 4D4x1000 nits or grubs are contained inside. Five percent of the space is used to store Sludge (typically up in the ceiling) and 15-20% percent of the walls also contains eggs (1D6x100+500).

32. Young Queen's Chamber (located in the eastern branch of level four). Includes her standard set of guards and entourage. See #17 (and/or the Queen R.C.C.) for details.

33. Egg Chamber. At least 1D6x10 Nannies and two Workers for every one Nanny taking care of and defending the eggs. 1D4x1000 eggs will be present at any given time. Ten to twenty percent of the chamber is used to store "Sludge" (typically up in the ceiling).

34. Egg Chamber and/or living area for Nannies. At least 1D6x10+12 Nannies are present at any given time. This small chamber has eggs stashed away in wall niches from floor to ceiling; as many as 3D6x100.

35. Nursery (Medium-small). Inhabited by at least 1D4x100 Nannies and an equal number of Workers. 6D6x100 nits or grubs are contained inside. Two-five percent of the space is used to store Sludge.

36. Nursery (Medium-small). Inhabited by at least 1D4x100 Nannies and an equal number of Workers. 6D6x100 nits or grubs are contained inside. Two-five percent of the space is used to store Sludge.

37. Nursery (Medium-large). 2D4x100+80 Nannies are present, along with two Workers for every one of them. 1D4x1000+4000 nits or grubs are contained inside. Two percent of the space is used to store Sludge, and three percent to store eggs (as necessary).

Note that this cluster of Nurseries and Egg Chambers may be used by more than one young Queen, but not by the Elder Queen.

38. Water Chamber and gathering place. This is typically a large, cavernous chamber with a massive pool of fresh drinking water supplied by an underground spring. In addition to providing drinking water to the Xiticix population, it is also a quiet place for meditation, resting and sleeping. 1D4x100 Xiticix of various species can be encountered here at any given time; 40% Workers, 30% Warriors, 30% other.

39. Living Area. Mostly Warriors (80%) and other fighting class Xiticix (20%); approximately 1D4x1000.

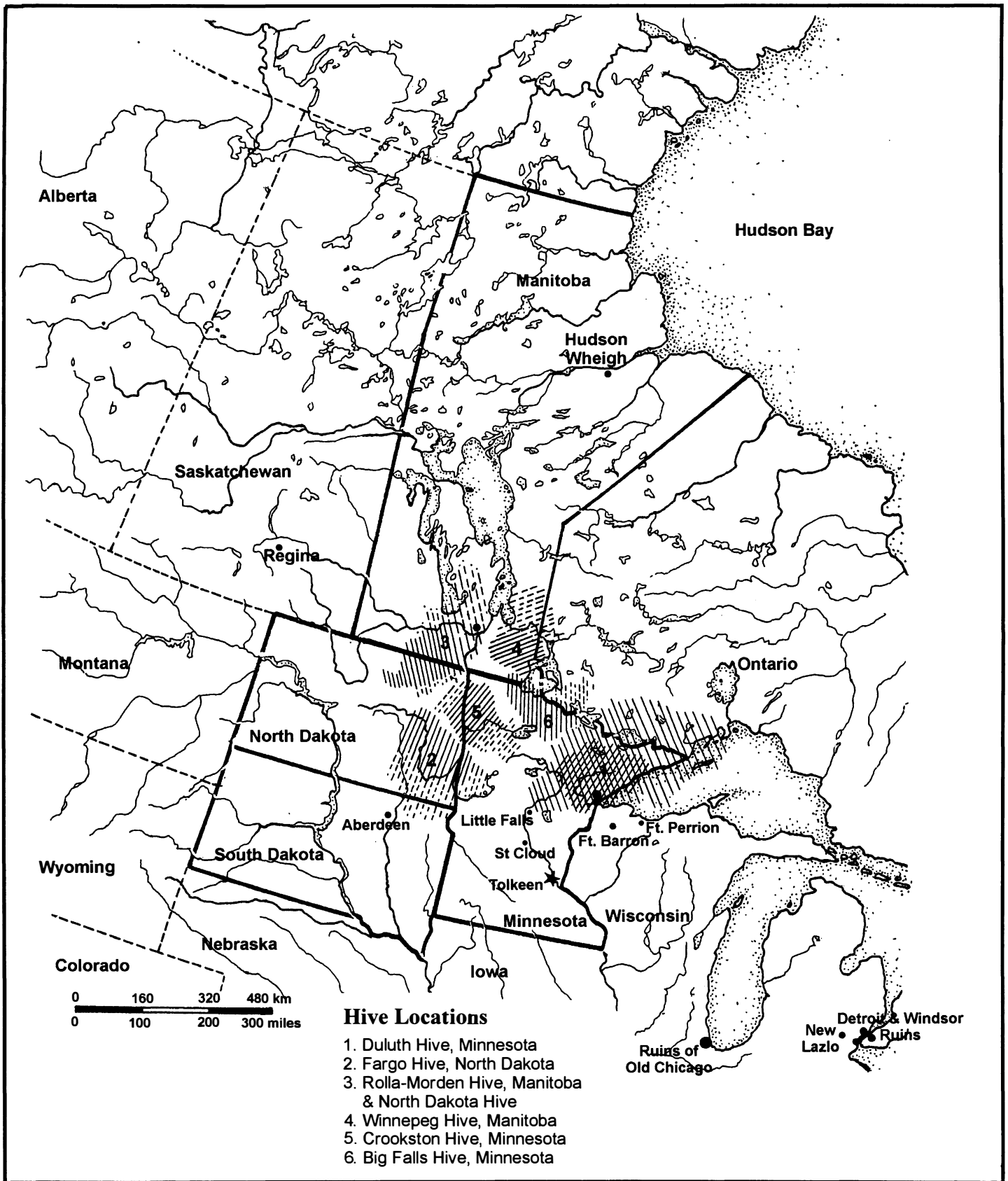
40. Living Area. Typically for Super-Warriors and/or Hunters.

Level Five: The Elder Queen's Court

41. Egg Chamber. At least 1D6x10+20 Nannies and two Workers for every one Nanny taking care of and defending the eggs. 1D6x1000 eggs will be present at any given time. Ten to twenty percent of the chamber is used to store "Sludge" (typically up in the ceiling).

42. Nursery (Medium-large). 2D4x100+80 Nannies are present, along with two Workers for every one of them. 1D4x1000+4000 nits or grubs are contained inside. Two percent





of the space is used to store Sludge, three percent to store eggs (as necessary).

43. Egg Chamber. At least 2D6x10+20 Nannies and two Workers for every one Nanny taking care of and defending the eggs. 1D6x1000+3000 eggs will be present at any given time. Ten to twenty percent of the chamber is used to store "Sludge" (typically up in the ceiling).

44. Nursery (Large). A bustling place inhabited by at least 1D6x1000+1200 Nannies and two Workers for every one of them. 2D6x1000+8000 nits or grubs are contained inside. Five percent of the space is used to store Sludge (typically up in the ceiling) and 5-10% percent of the walls also contains eggs (1D6x1000).

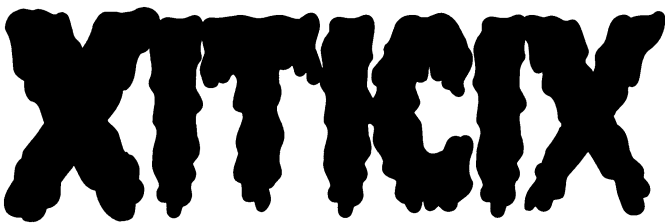
45. Nursery (Large). Same as #44.

46. The Elder Queen's Chamber! Includes her standard set of guards and entourage.

Elite Guards: 1D6+10 Warriors, 1D4+6 Hunters, 1D4+4 Leapers and two Super-Warriors.

If the Queen is threatened, she and her defenders will call for additional help via telepathy and chemical alarms. 1D4x100 nearby Nannies and/or the Workers under their command will arrive to help within one melee round (15 seconds)! 1D4+1 Super-Warriors, 6D6 Warriors, 2D6 Hunters and/or 2D6 Leapers will arrive within two melee rounds (30 seconds). 1D6x10 additional Warriors will arrive approximately every minute (four melee rounds) until the enemy is defeated, the danger is over, and the warning is called off. If necessary, thousands can swarm the area in less than 10 minutes.

Attendants: 1D6+12 Workers, 1D4+4 Nannies and one Digger who attends to all the Queen's other needs.



By Wayne Breaux Jr. & Kevin Siembieda

“All names given for the various Xiticix are common among the wilderness people who live or hunt near Xiticix Territory. They have been preserved not only for accuracy, but because most of them seemed appropriate to the descriptions received from Orion Greenfeld and other field operatives.”

— Excerpt from official CS documentation

Special Powers & Abilities of the Xiticix

When the Xiticix were first discovered, little was known about them. For example, it was originally thought there were only three types, the Warrior, Worker and Queen. Likewise, it was erroneously believed that the Xiticix were comparatively weak and low level Mega-Damage creatures — some are, some are not. Subsequent research and dramatically increased encounters with the creatures have shown them to possess supernatural strength, a higher Mega-Damage Capacity than originally believed, greater diversity in appearance/type/species, and a range of specialized abilities often exclusive to a specific Xiticix species (i.e. the Digger has certain abilities that are different from a Warrior, and so on).

The following Xiticix powers and abilities are generally common to *all* Xiticix. Specific abilities and modifications unique to a particular type of Xiticix (Queen, Warrior, Digger, etc.) may be mentioned but are typically described in complete detail under that specific alien insect R.C.C.

Note: All bonuses are cumulative.

Insect-like Vision

All Xiticix have the equivalent of multi-faceted insect eyes, and most have *seven* of them, two large and three small on the front of their face and one on each side near the temple, where an ear might be on a human. These eyes provide poor clarity of vision making close work and literacy impossible (vision is about half as clear as a human's), but is equal to human vision in distance. Although Xiticix vision is crude when compared to the sharp, full-color vision of humans, they also possess some capabilities human eye's do not.

1. 340 degree field of vision. The placement and nature of their seven eyes provides a much wider field of peripheral vision, including the ability to see things that we would consider behind them.

2. Polarized sight: Can tell direction (95%) by the position of the sun and direction of sunlight. Polarized vision also means Xiticix are not adversely affected by bright lights or glare, including the Blinding Flash spell.

3. Infrared and Ultraviolet Vision: Can see into these spectrums of light and operate quite well at night.

4. Nightvision: 1000 foot (305 m) range.

5. Hardened eyes: Typically 15 M.D.C. for each of the large pair (2) and 10 M.D.C. for each of the small eyes (5).

6. Optics bonus: +2 on initiative, +1 to strike and +2 to dodge.

Note: Most Xiticix have seven eyes. Two large ones, spaced widely apart, three small ones located on what humans would consider to the forehead, and two at the temples. Consequently, it is difficult to blind a Xiticix.

To specifically target an eye, the attacker must carefully aim and make a “called shot.” Even then, these are small and difficult targets to hit, and the shooter strikes at -5 to hit the large ones and -9 to hit a small one. Such a “called shot” is possible only when the Xiticix target is stationary. When flying or on the move it is impossible to target an eye or antenna even with a “called shot.”

Even if blinded, the normal penalties are half due to the compensating abilities of the antennae.

Antennae

Most Xiticix have two antennae mounted on the top of their heads; a few, like the Nanny, have three. Non-Xiticix people sometimes mistake the small pair of feeler-like appendages or horns on the sides of the head as an additional pair of antennae, but they are not. These small appendages are just part of the alien creatures' head and have no remarkable ability or purpose.

The antennae function sort of like arms and hands that hear and smell. The sensitive antennae can feel motion, wind and changes in temperature, and touch objects. In this capacity, the antennae can be used to feel around in darkness and to identify food, friends and enemies by touch or scent. The typical antenna is covered with thousands of tiny tubercles and scent-sensitive hairs, making it super-sensitive to odors. The Xiticix can smell and identify a range of smells twice as great as the best hunting dog or Dog Boy, and at twice the distance!

Note: Most Xiticix have two antennae located on the top of the head, a bit toward the back. Each is prehensile and moves independent of the other like another pair of arms. During combat, the antennae are usually pulled back and pressed close to the head to avoid damage in battle (the antennae on the Super-Warrior are concealed and extendable as needed). If one is

chopped off, the Xiticix becomes enraged, but is not seriously impaired — all antenna abilities remain intact. If both antennae are destroyed, all abilities provided from them are lost and the Xiticix feels crippled. Such members of the community will be nervous, jumpy and easily agitated. Antennaeless Super-Warriors, Warriors, Hunters and Leapers tend to be loners, easily provoked into fighting frenzies and will battle non-Xiticix to the death. Half of the Super-Warriors, Hunters, and Leapers disabled in this way will leave the hive to fend for themselves in the wild until their sensory organs regrow — approximately 50% perish in the process.

Antennae (as well as arms and wings) regenerate, but the process is painstakingly slow for the Xiticix who rely on them so heavily. It takes a pair 2D6+6 months to regrow to full size (twice that time for lost arms or wings). When the antennae have regrown half to three quarters their full size, the abilities they offer begin to return, but at half the normal range and skill ability.



To specifically target an antenna, the attacker must carefully aim and make a “called shot.” Even then these are small, constantly moving and difficult targets to hit, so the shooter is -5 to strike. Such a “called shot” is possible only when the Xiticix target is stationary. When flying or on the move it is impossible to hit even the antennae with a “called shot.”

Vulnerability: These acutely sensitive organs are vulnerable to sonic weapons and vibration. Magic and supernatural abilities based on sound or vibration inflict an additional die of damage (e.g. an attack that normally does 2D6 damage will inflict 3D6 to

the Xiticix) and temporarily knock out all of the Xiticix’s special antennae abilities for 3D4 melee rounds per blast. High-tech weapons that cause similar sonic damage have the same effect.

Devices that create “white noise” will negate all the Xiticix’s *auditory abilities* and hamper all other antennae abilities (reduce range and skill percentage by half). These penalties apply to all Xiticix within range of the white noise and lasts for as long as they are exposed to the painful sound (causes a painful headache and disorientation in addition to the penalties previously noted). However, the insectoids recover within 1D4 melee rounds (15-60 seconds) after the white noise stops. Coalition troops regularly use white noise generators when combating Xiticix.

Auditory/Vibration/Motion Sensing Capabilities:

1. Track by sound alone: 66% (+1% per level of experience for Hunters & Super-Warriors). Can locate human prey by following the vibration of a running car, robot engine, voices, noise from movement, or even the audio transmission of a radio. Range: 1000 feet (305 m).

2. Detect movement and track by motion detection alone: 50% (+2% per level of experience for Hunters). Can follow and locate prey by following the air vibrations caused by movement (not sound per se, but air movement). Range: 500 feet (152 m).

3. Feel the vibrations of an approaching ground vehicle(s), giant robot, herd of animals, and giant animals up to six miles (9.6 km) away. Running or walking humans 2000 feet (610 m) away. Flying vehicle or large flying animal 4000 feet (1219 m) away. Strong winds over 25 mph (40 mph) will interfere with the ability to detect other flyers, reducing the range to roughly 500 feet (152 m).

4. Hear Ultrasonic sound, super-keen hearing: Average range 2000 feet (610 m), double when it is absolutely silent (little if any ambient sound).

5. Communicate through ultrasonic sound: Average range: 2000 feet (610 m), double if absolutely silent. Ultrasonic communication can *not* be heard by humans, most D-Bees and animals, unless the sentient being is using some mechanical means of audio augmentation (cybernetics, special sound detection equipment, etc.). Even when detected, the Xiticix language sounds like chittering, buzzing, squeals and musical notes. The Xiticix are also capable of producing sounds/communications audible to humans.

Tactile Capabilities of the Antennae (sense of touch):

1. Accurately identify common, known objects or substances by touch alone, including the fungus they feed on and Xiticix weapons: 65% — only 30% if uncommon.
2. Identify temperature (within 1D6 degrees): 75%; includes air temperature as well as that of physical objects.
3. Accurately identify wind direction and speed: 85%.
4. Detect a rapidly approaching object or attack from behind or the side within 12 feet (3.6 m): +1 on initiative, +1 to dodge.

Olfactory Capabilities of the Antennae:

All Xiticix have an acute sense of smell and can detect trace chemicals in the air or by touch via the antennae.

1. Superior sense of smell. Can smell odors/scents/chemicals up to one mile (1.6 km) away, double or triple if carried by the wind! This ability goes hand in hand with their own use of chemical excretions and sprays.

The olfactory abilities of mutant Dog Boys are roughly one million times better than a normal human. The Xiticix's are two million times better, and the Xiticix Hunter's ability is even better than that! A Xiticix can follow a scent trail that is six days old (provided it hasn't been washed away) and recognize an odor from smelling only a few molecules! This is possible because the insectoid's olfactory center is dramatically differently from a human's and is 80 times larger and more sensitive. Thus, a the average Xiticix can smell odors (that aren't sealed in airtight containers) up to 24 inches (0.6 m) underground and up to three feet (0.9 m) under snow.

All Xiticix possess this heightened sense of smell, but most use this ability to follow scent trails left by their fellow Xiticix, recognize their fellow hive members, and to protect the hive. When they detect the strong presence of an "alien" scent (i.e. humanoid or animal smells and other scents that do not belong) within the hive complex, at least that section of the hive goes on alert with Workers, Nannies and others taking defensive positions while Warriors go to investigate.

Only the **Xiticix Hunter, Warrior and Super-Warrior** are highly skilled trackers expert in recognizing and following "alien" scents. These natural trackers can identify and follow the "scent image" of specific individuals from their sweat (every individual human's sweat — and most D-Bees' — is unique, like a fingerprint). Their olfactory senses are so great and they have become so expert in tracking by scent, that they can deduce from the evaporation of the sweat and various other ingredients of the smell, which scents are freshest, and what direction they are coming from or leading to, and the Xiticix can even guess which way the person may have gone when the trail breaks or runs cold.

Note: Most sealed suits of "environmental" body armor, power armor and robot vehicles are airtight and successfully contain the scent of the individual(s) inside. Non-environmental armor where the head or other body parts are exposed will enable the insect aliens to literally "smell them coming a mile or two away."

2. Common and strong scents: Recognize and accurately identify general/common/known smells, including Xiticix chemical excretions, gases, food, blood, animals, and the path used by a group of humans, mutant animals, D- Bees or monsters, as well as other strong and/or distinctive odors.

Base Skill: 90% +1% per level of experience.

Range: 300 feet (91.5 m) per level of experience.

3. Identify and remember specific or unusual odors: Including the scent of specific individuals (specific characters), poisons or drugs mixed into food or drink, unique and usual scents. The Xiticix must be familiar with the target subject and/or have a piece of clothing, hair, blood, etc. that the tracker can use as a reference.

Base Skill: 54% +2% per level of experience.

Range: 1200 feet (365 m).

4. Track by smell alone! This means the Xiticix relies entirely on his sense of smell (blinded so he cannot follow physical tracks/footprints or any other visible trail). This means the Xiticix can sniff his way through total darkness if there is a scent that can be followed, and the creature suffers only *half* the normal penalties to strike, parry, and dodge when blinded or in magical darkness.

Base Skill: 75% (+2% per level of experience for Hunters and Super-Warriors only); roll once for every 1000 feet (305 m). Double the range to follow the chemical secretions of other Xiticix. The range is four miles (6.4 km) for smelling the chemical alarm of other Xiticix (automatically recognizes the alarm smell) and two miles (3.2 km) for smelling the marking scent of Hunters (75% chance to detect). A failed roll means the scent trail is temporarily lost. Two successful rolls out of three means the trail has been recovered. Can smell the scent of human blood up to three miles (4.8 km) away.

5. Smell large fires and the coming of rain: 60% (Hunters are +2% per level of experience). Range: Two miles (3.2 km; double for Hunters).

6. Automatically recognize the scent of fellow hive members and the Queens. Whether a hive has only a few thousand or a half million members, each bears a distinctive (to the Xiticix and barely noticeable to Dog Boys) scent that identifies them as members of that specific hive. This is one way Xiticix quickly and correctly identify fellow Xiticix from rival hive colonies.

Note: Humanoids who cover themselves in the scent of a Xiticix colony will usually be mistaken for a Xiticix. That's how much the bugs rely on their olfactory abilities. Such trickery can enable a human, D-Bee or dragon to pass through Xiticix territory unmolested. Unfortunately, the only way to get the fluid to cover oneself with the scent is to kill a Xiticix and remove its scent gland (one gland holds enough fluid to cover 1D4+2 humans). See #3 under **Xiticix Chemicals** for details.

Xiticix Chemical Abilities

Call to Arms

Chemical Alarm

Colony Identification Scent

Death Scent Alarm

Resin

Sludge

Spit Acid

Trail Scent

Summary of who has what chemical abilities

Call to Arms: Queen, Super-Warrior, Hunter & Nanny.

Chemical Alarm: All.

Colony Identification: All.

Death Scent: Queen, Super-Warrior, Warriors & Hunters.

Resin: Queen & Digger.

Sludge: Queen & Nanny.

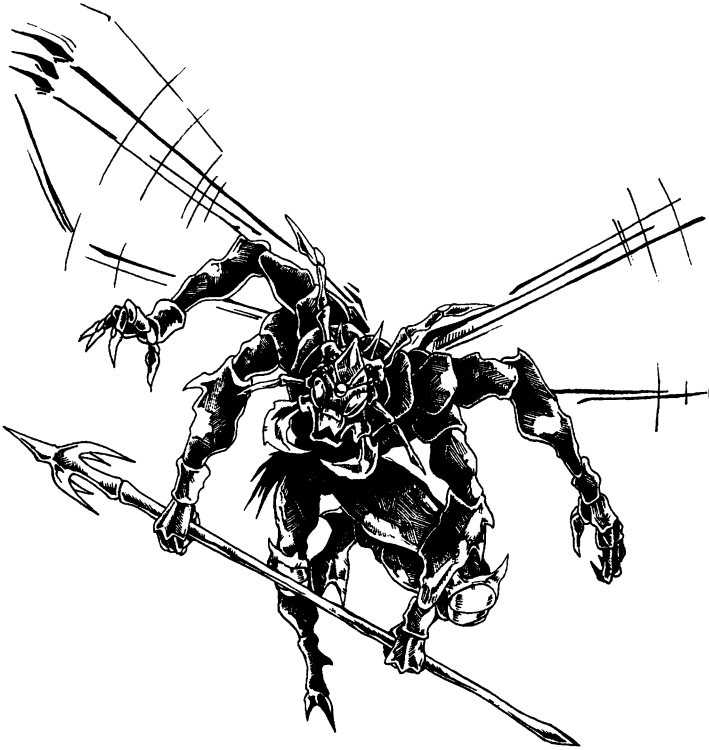
Spit Acid: Queen, Super-Warrior, Warrior, Hunter & Nanny.

Trail Scent: Queen, Super-Warrior, Hunter, Digger & Nanny.

Chemical Descriptions

The Xiticix have special glands capable of releasing a number of different chemical scents for several purposes, ranging from communication and identification to raising alarms. Note that the different species of Xiticix possess different chemical secreting abilities. The "alarm scents" can only be smelled by other Xiticix and characters with advanced/superior sense of smell, including Dog Boys. **Note:** Most Xiticix can use each of their available chemicals repeatedly several times an hours; pretty much as often as needed. The Death Scent is unleashed only when the Xiticix is

slain or near death. In the latter case, if that Xiticix should survive, his or her Death Scent is replaced.



1. Call to Arms Chemical: This special chemical not only tells all Xiticix of a hive to prepare for imminent combat, it actually stimulates their equivalent of adrenaline and urges them to do so. This makes all Xiticix rush to their combat positions. Furthermore, those under its influence (i.e. all who smell it) are eager to enter battle and feel excited.

Super-Warriors, Warriors, Hunters and *Leapers* are naturally aggressive and are already unafraid in combat, so this chemical has no special effect on them other than to cause them to ready themselves for battle.

Those most affected are non-combat Xiticix. *Workers, Diggers*, and even *grubs* who smell the chemical get revved-up for combat and enjoy the bonuses of one extra attack per melee round, +1 to strike, parry, and dodge, +2 to initiative, and +2 to M.D. for the duration of the battle.

Nannies (and *Queens*) are less dramatically affected, but are still excited by the chemical, which gives them one extra attack per melee round and +2 to M.D. they inflict. They regard the “call to arms” as an alert to defend the Nursery and Birthing Chambers. Thus, as soon as they catch a whiff of the alert, they marshal other *Nannies* (15%), *Workers* (55%), *Warriors* (20%) and others (10%) to form a defensive line to protect against possible invaders who reach the heart of the Hive Network. Meanwhile, they will plot and prepare for evacuation of the nits, grubs and eggs, while they wait. The moment the sounds and smells of battle reach them they will begin to move the young and eggs to a different location away from the fighting. All *Nannies* and a third to half of all non-fighting class Xiticix will participate in the evacuation, while the rest, under the command of the *Nannies* and/or *Queen(s)* stand to fight any intruders who threaten the young.

The *Nanny* is one of the Xiticix who can make a Call to Arms. This is done whenever a *Nanny* recognizes an intruder and/or she

or the young under her charge are threatened (just seeing a non-Xiticix inside the tunnel network is considered a threat and reason to unleash the Call to Arms). Every fighting class Xiticix within a 1,000 foot (305 m) radius will come running to the location of the scent, while all others prepare for combat and take their defense positions.

The *Queen(s)* have and use the chemical Call to Arms in a similar fashion as the *Nannies*, only her scent alarm has double the range and carries her distinct personal scent (a slight variation of the Colony’s Identification Scent), so the *Warriors* immediately know she is in danger and rush to her aid immediately. *Nannies* will respond to protect and defend the young, while dispatching fighters to go help the *Queen*.

Note: This ability is available only to the *Xiticix Queens, Super-Warrior, Nanny* and *Hunter*.

The Call to Arms scent is only used when the Hive has actually been invaded with intruders still present or when it has fallen under attack. It is never used frivolously nor when trouble is suspected. Thus, a Call to Arms is made when the exterior Hive Network (i.e. Towers) falls under attack by a serious threat (otherwise 1-6 squadrons of *Warriors, Leapers* and/or *Hunters* will deal with minor problems and small groups), and when the underground tunnel network has been penetrated by outsiders.

In the latter case, no chances are taken, so even if one lone humanoid or any Non-Xiticix life form (other than a small, harmless animal) is seen inside the tunnels, the Call to Arms will be sounded. It will also be released when the *Queen* or a *Nursery* is under attack, even if the force responsible (i.e. invisible attacker or magical force) is not readily apparent.

The severity of the danger and number of attackers or invaders will be indicated by the strength of the scent. For example, when the colony is under heavy or widespread attack or invasion, each Xiticix with this chemical ability will unleash it when the sights and sounds of combat or intruders reach him. This way everybody in the Hive Network can gauge the severity of the situation as well as identify where the enemy is located. Likewise, as the smell becomes stronger or moves, it lets those away from the actual battle areas know if the fight is coming in their direction, intensifying or moving away. In turn, this enables the *Warriors, Nannies* and others to take the appropriate action — such as whether or not the *Queens* and *grubs* need to be evacuated, where the enemy is coming from, where to establish new lines of defense, and so on. The level of crisis will also be indicated by the addition and strength of the *Death Scent* unleashed by select Xiticix as they die.

Remember that these scents and smells, while strong to Xiticix and detectable to select other beings with a superior sense of smell, are not detectable to humans and most D-Bees even if thousands of Xiticix release them.

2. Chemical Alarm: This scent is a general alarm that says to one’s fellow Xiticix that danger/trouble may be afoot. For example, discovering sabotage inside a chamber or traces that a humanoid is or has been present recently, would trigger an alarm. Similarly, a chemical alarm is sent when a small band of humanoids is discovered within Xiticix claimed territory or traveling near (or even through) the exterior of a Hive Network, or a large number of people/troops/vehicles or conflict is taking place within a mile or two of the borders of Xiticix Territory. Basically, it is a low priority alert that warns of potential danger or localized trouble. In the latter case, a Xiticix who falls under attack will

release an alarm — which will alert all the Xiticix within a four mile (6.4 km) radius of possible approaching danger and instigate a squad of 6-12 Xiticix Warriors or Leapers (and/or 1-4 Hunters acting independent of the Warriors) to come and investigate the “alarm.” They can easily track down the location of the chemical alarm to find who sent it. If that individual is not at the location they will spread out to search for him and any signs of trouble. **Note:** Within the borders of Xiticix Territory, but on the surface, the response time will be 1D4 minutes. Within the Xiticix city of towers or inside the labyrinth of tunnels, the response time is 1D4 melee rounds; typically 30 seconds or less! In the wilderness away from Xiticix territory, there may be no response whatsoever, unless there are other Xiticix within the four mile (6.4 km) range.

This ability is available to *ALL* adult Xiticix. Remember that this scent, while strong to Xiticix and detectable by Dog Boys and others with a superior sense of smell, is not detectable to humans and most D-Bees.

3. Colony Identification Scent. Each and every Xiticix from a particular colony can be identified by other Xiticix by their distinctive body odor. All members of a specific colony share the same identifying scent. This serves two purposes: One, a quick, easy means of security identification (i.e. those with the right chemical “signature” are accepted by the hive defenders and allowed into the Hive Network) and, two, as a means of identifying rivals and enemies (i.e. those with the wrong scent do not belong and represent danger). This is especially helpful when Xiticix face members of their own race in combat. All Xiticix look very similar to one another, especially to humans and most noninsect races. Without scent identification, it would be difficult to identify the members of a rival Xiticix colony. However, the Colony Identification Scent instantly marks a Xiticix from a rival colony; a crucial distinction in combat and an easy way to identify potential raiders and trouble.

Vulnerability: Scent Disguise by Non-Xiticix: The Xiticix rely so heavily on scent identification that Psi-Stalkers (and to a lesser degree, Wilderness Scouts, Hunter-Trappers, and Indian Warriors who observe and combat the Xiticix) have discovered a way to trick the alien insects. Humanoids can *disguise* themselves using a Xiticix scent gland. Of course, a Xiticix must first be slain and the Bug Man’s scent gland removed — the characters involved must be careful not to get the “Death Scent” on them or must wash it off completely.

The chemical secreted from the gland can be spread over as many as six human-sized individuals to cover them with the identifying scent of the colony. The ID scent will stay with them for 1D4+1 hours before it becomes weak enough to tip the Xiticix that something is not right. However, if the gland is kept intact and carried by one individual, the scent remains good for 1D6+2 weeks.

This “scent disguise” will confuse Warriors and Hunters who will not attack or challenge the proper smelling strangers unless they attack or threaten the hive or its members. Workers, Diggers, Leapers, Nannies and young Xiticix are completely fooled by this ploy and will accept those who smell “right” without question. Only if the strangers attack will these Xiticix retaliate, but they will remain confused by the “scent disguised” invaders, giving the deceivers the initiative (no need to roll, they have it and the Xiticix don’t) and the element of surprise each melee round of combat. The bewildered Xiticix just can not understand why one

of their own (the scent disguised strangers) would be attacking them. **Note:** This is so disorienting that *Workers, Leapers, Diggers, and Nannies* (nits and grubs too) will fight at half their normal attacks per melee round and without initiative. *Young and Elder Queens* are NEVER fooled by this ploy, and the *Warriors* and *Hunters* get over the confusion after the first melee round and fight without penalty.

Characters trying to use the “scent disguise” must be careful to kill and extract the scent glands from Xiticix who herald from the correct “hive.” If they accidentally use the scent of a rival colony, the Xiticix they are trying to trick will immediately attack them and fight to the death, believing a rival colony is trying to invade them. Likewise, unknowingly travelling into the territory claimed by a different Xiticix colony (remember, there are six known to exist) while carrying a gland or while covered in the scent from another colony, will send the unmistakable message that rival “Xiticix” are invading. This will put the entire Hive Network on immediate alert, cause Xiticix defenders to ready for attack, and send a swarm of Warriors (1D6 Xiticix for every one player character, plus one Super-Warrior) to “engage the enemy” — that’s the player group. Fortunately, these defenders are likely to be satisfied with repelling the enemy force, but if angered enough, they will fight to the death, with scores of additional Warriors swarming upon any invaders who remain within their borders, the instant the first team is slain.

Note: Xiticix *never* disguise themselves in the scent of another colony or as anything else. Other than regional Wild Psi-Stalkers who regularly battle the Xiticix, very few people know about this trick. The CS has learned it from allies and scouts among the Psi-Stalkers, but they keep this particular secret to themselves. It is knowledge that the Psi-Stalkers who ally themselves to the Lazlo forces will share.

All Xiticix possess this scent feature.

4. Death Scent Chemical Alarm: *Xiticix Queens, Super-Warriors, Warriors, and Hunters* are all capable of releasing a distinctive chemical when they are “slain” or die violently. The Death Scent is not released when the Xiticix dies of “natural causes.” When one of these Xiticix is killed or loses more than 90% of its M.D.C., it releases a strong chemical that reeks of death. This warns other Xiticix that one of their members has just been violently killed, signaling danger. Any *Warrior, Hunter* or *Leaper* that detects the Death Scent will quickly and carefully go to investigate, but *Diggers, Workers, Nannies, nits, and grubs* move away and get ready to defend themselves or take cover. Meanwhile, if the Death Scent is close or strong, the adults will release their own Chemical Alarm to alert others that danger may be coming their way — which in turn will put the fighting classes of Xiticix on alert and summon 1D4 squadrons of Warriors to investigate.

The Death Scent can be smelled by Xiticix up to four miles (6.4 km) away, although it is strongest within the first mile (1.6 km). The Death Scent within the Xiticix tunnels or city of towers sends an alarm throughout the colony, causing the fighting Xiticix to rally and investigate and the others to take immediate cover and prepare for attack. Moreover, if slain in hand to hand combat, the individual(s) responsible for the Xiticix’s death will be “marked” by the Death Scent and carry it with him (them) wherever he goes. Unless thoroughly washed off, this chemical remains active for 1D4 days and will be recognized by all Xiticix, including those from rival colonies.

The Death Scent functions as an alarm to notify other members of the colony that an enemy or other form of “killing” danger is loose in the area. Obviously an accident that has claimed lives will also release the Death Scent, however, since this scent is limited to Warriors, Super-Warriors, Hunters and Queens, the likelihood of an “accident” being the cause is slim and none. Thus, those who smell it know that murder has taken place and the Hive Network or other Xiticix in the area could be in danger. The more Xiticix defenders slain, the stronger the scent and the greater the alarm. Depending on the “size” or intensity of the Death Scent, one squadron, or several squadrons to a massive swarm of Warriors will respond to investigate and retaliate. Meanwhile, other Warriors and members of the fighting classes of Xiticix will mobilize and ready themselves for combat, while the rest take defensive action.

Note: Increase the distance the scent can be detected by one mile (1.6 km) for every 10-40 Xiticix slain.

Remember that this scent, while strong to Xiticix and detectable by Dog Boys and others with a superior sense of smell, it is not detectable by humans and most D-Bees.

5. Resin: Only the Queens and Diggers possess this unusual ability. See #5 of the Digger’s *Natural Abilities* for complete details. Fighting class Xiticix often have the Digger augment their natural M.D.C. exoskeleton with Mega-Damage resin plating as well as resin cast lades, spikes, and barbs applied directly to their bodies.

6. Sludge: This paste-like goo is essentially concentrated nutrients and P.P.E. stored in a solid form. Sludge is a special “baby formula” fed to nits and grubs to accelerate their growth and cuts the normal growth period from nit to adult from roughly 37-42 months to 19-22 months. Without “Sludge,” a nit grows and develops at a slower pace, taking roughly three to three and a half years to reach maturity. This is done only when the hive colony needs to grow rapidly.

The Creation Process: The Sludge creation process is terrible, for it requires the slaying of a living creature to draw on the doubled P.P.E. at the time of death (ambient P.P.E. or ley line P.P.E. can not be used). The corpse is then devoured, along with a sizeable portion of the fungus normally eaten by the Xiticix, and regurgitated as “Sludge.” Contained in the Sludge are magical properties that increase the growth process. The nits and grubs instinctively gobble it up. Exactly how P.P.E. is trapped in this goo, and why it works to accelerate growth remains a mystery to practitioners of magic. These “quick grown” Xiticix are normal in every way, and do not possess magical powers.

Components Required: The living victims are typically either humans or D-Bees captured by Hunters, Leapers or Warriors (Hunters often seek out those with high P.P.E.) or crippled or mortally wounded Warriors and other Xiticix who gladly sacrifice their lives to help the colony. Most “fighting class” Xiticix prefer death rather than living on as a cripple or blind (see *Limited Powers of Regeneration* to get a clear idea of what constitutes permanent crippling).

Time it takes to make Sludge: The act of creation takes approximately 2-4 minutes and requires a significant amount of P.P.E. To create one pound of Sludge requires 25 P.P.E. points (this can be an accumulative amount from two or more victims), but the Sludge itself will end up holding 24 P.P.E. for each 25 points invested; one point is lost in the creation/conversion process.

Notes: Some people have called Sludge “concentrated P.P.E.,” which is not entirely true because the P.P.E. contained in the goo can NOT be accessed and used by men of magic or P.P.E. vampires. A more accurate analogy would be to consider “Sludge” as a magic “food” or even a magic “potion.” Why? Because the only way to enjoy its benefits is to ingest it. Like a potion, the grey muck has only one specific purpose/result, to “quick grow” baby Xiticix! Furthermore, if eaten by any non-Xiticix, it has no beneficial effect and is poisonous inflicting 1D4x10 points of damage direct to Hit Points (2D6 M.D. to Mega-Damage creatures). It also causes nausea, stomach cramps, vomiting, weakness and the following penalties for 2D6 hours: No initiative, attacks per melee round are by one, reduce speed and combat bonuses by half, and skill performance by -30%. Victims are quite literally sick to their stomachs (a super bad case of food poisoning).

Sludge smells and tastes horrible, and offers absolutely NO nourishment or benefit to non-Xiticix. It can not be diluted and used as a less potent poison, although it will make food and drink taste putrid. The P.P.E. contained in it can not be used in any other way.

Duration: Sludge can be kept and stored for up to one year, but after that it spoils and becomes hard and inedible. Currently, 90% of all Sludge is consumed within two weeks after its creation as the Xiticix try to maintain their explosive population growth.

Restrictions: Only the *Queens* and *Nannies* can make Sludge.

7. Spit Acid: Certain Xiticix can spit a powerful acid at their enemies.

Damage: The acid spray covers 1D4 square feet and does 1D4 M.D. per melee for up to 2D4 melee rounds. Unless it can be removed via magic, psionics, or dousing with “salt water” (a natural neutralizer for the substance), the acid will continue to do damage until it naturally becomes inert within 30-120 seconds. Removal of damaged armor or equipment as soon as possible is often advisable.

Maximum Range: 80 feet (24.3 m); only the Super-Warrior can spit farther — 100 feet (30.5 m).

Strike Bonus: +2

Attacks per Melee: Each acid attack counts as one melee attack or action and can only be performed twice per melee round.

Note: This ability is available only to the *Xiticix Queens*, *Nanny*, *Super-Warrior*, *Warrior*, and *Hunter*.

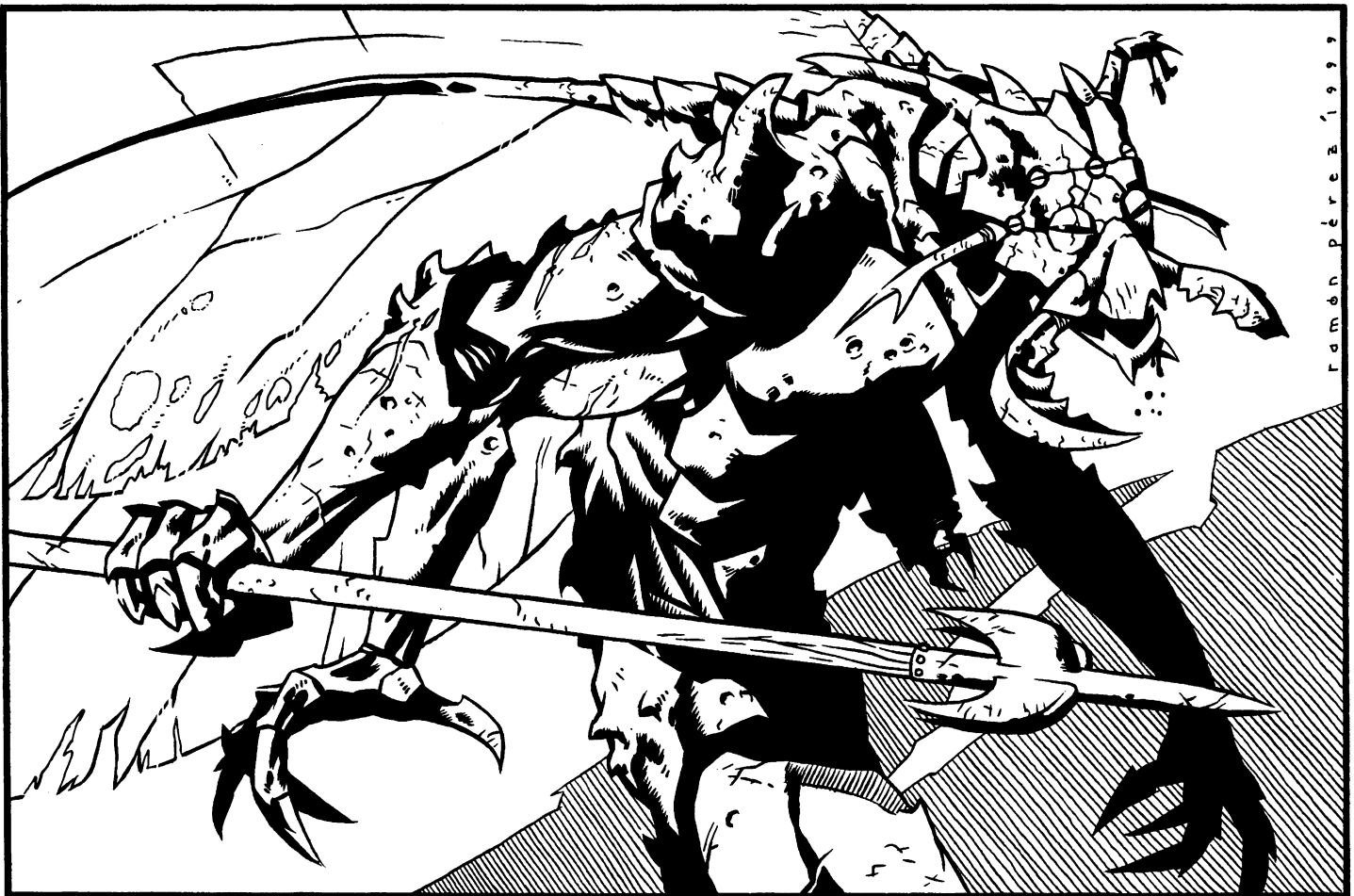
8. Trail Scent: This is a light chemical excretion that marks the Xiticix’s trail so that others of its race can follow it. Only Dog Boys and other creatures with a highly developed sense of smell and the ability to “track by scent/smell alone” can detect the scent and successfully follow the trail. However, most non-Xiticix suffer a penalty of -15% to do so successfully (the Dog Boys are only -5%).

This ability is available to the *Xiticix Queens*, *Hunter*, *Super-Warrior*, *Digger*, and *Nanny*.

Limited Powers of Regeneration

All Xiticix have limited powers of regeneration. In most cases this is limited to the extremities.

The antennae regenerate and grow to full size within 2D6+6 months. When the antennae have regrown to half to three quarters their full size, the abilities they offer begin to return, but at half the normal range and skill ability. A partially damaged



antenna or one that is cut in half functions at half the normal range and ability but regenerates in half the time; 1D6+3 months.

Lost hands, arms, feet and wings take longer to regrow but can also regenerate in 4D6+12 months. In all cases, the appendage can be used at half its normal capacity once it has regrown to roughly three quarters its normal, natural size. Fingers and toes regrow in half this time.

A partially damaged wing will regenerate and heal completely (looks as good as new) within 1D6+4 months.

Normal Healing: Most Xiticix recover M.D.C. at a rate of 1D6 points per 24 hours. Super-Warriors heal twice as quickly, recovering 1D6 M.D.C. every 12 hours, and Queens recover 1D4x10 per 24 hours.

Unless stated otherwise, most Xiticix are +6 to save vs poisons and disease and recover in half the usual time.

When a limb is severed, chopped off or pulled right out of the socket, there is little bleeding, so Xiticix do not have to worry about subsequent damage from blood loss. Their grayish-green blood clots within seconds and pain-killing agents take immediate effect to enable the insect-monsters to keep fighting with minimal impairment or suffering.

Penalties & Limitations:

The eyes, mandibles, legs and other body parts do *NOT* regenerate, once lost they are gone forever.

In the case of feet and legs, secreted resin can be used to create an artificial replacement, like the peg leg of ancient pirates, but with the following restrictions and penalties.

- One artificial lower portion of a leg will reduce running and climbing speed by 10%, and climbing ability by 10%.

- One entire artificial leg (above the knee) will reduce running and climbing speed, as well as the climbing ability by 30%, leaping distance by 30% and the dodge bonus is -2.
- Two artificial legs will reduce running and climbing speed by 80%, leaps are absolutely impossible and negate the dodge bonus completely. Any attempt to dodge is an unmodified roll of the dice. Also reduce all other combat bonuses, including initiative, strike, parry, roll with impact, etc. by two points (wobbly, poor balance; can't set himself or move quickly). In addition, the ability to climb/stick to walls is impaired. Not only is speed reduced as noted, but the artificial limbs dangle down from the ceiling (-50% to prowl/hide), clatter when the creature is on the move, and the Xiticix must rely entirely on hanging on with his arms and hands, preventing him from attacking while on the wall or ceiling (needs his four upper body limbs to cling to the surface). As a result, the crippled alien insect must drop to the ground (using up one melee action) to fight.

Note: Warriors, Super-Warriors, and Hunters will usually continue to fight to the death when they incur such devastating injuries, preferring death to a life as a cripple. Those who live despite their best efforts to the contrary, will either leave the hive and go forth into the world as insane killing machines or volunteer to be slain and turned into "Sludge" by the Queens or Nannies. Those who go on a killing spree, attack anything from humanoids and demons to monsters, fighting to the death. This is actually a bid to die in combat as a fighter should. This carnage will continue until the crippled Xiticix is slain.

The communal, labor-oriented Xiticix, Worker, Digger, Leaper and Nanny, will continue to work as well as they can,

however those who are seriously crippled (both legs lost and perhaps suffering from other injuries that will take months to recover from) will be killed and turned into Sludge. Most will volunteer for this humane end to life, about 20% continue to struggle on until they are commanded to give up their life by a superior. If “Sludge” is not needed, they are slain and either disposed of or eaten.

Other Physical Features of Note

- Adhesion: The ability to climb and adhere to surfaces: Most Xiticix are able to attach themselves to any solid surface by their fingers, hands, toes and feet. This means that they can walk on walls or ceilings, and can climb most surfaces effortlessly and at full running speed. The only limits to this ability are the Bug Man’s own strength and speed. Attempting to carry a weight greater than its P.S.x100 in pounds (0.45 kg), will cause it to immediately fall off. Climbing and crawling speed along walls and ceilings is equal to half the running speed when carrying a heavy load (P.S. x30 in pounds). Loose rocks, crumbling plaster, ice, oil or other slippery substances will prevent the creature from adhering to a surface. Polished metal, chrome, and glass are not considered slippery substances and can be held onto and climbed, but at half the Xiticix’s normal speed.
- Swim. Most Xiticix are terrible swimmers with the equivalent, instinctive ability of 30%. However, the Leaper is a comparatively excellent swimmer (see that R.C.C. for details).
- Double-jointed and ambidextrous with all limbs.
- Clawed fingers and toes.
- Wings. All adult Xiticix have wings and can fly. Unless noted otherwise, flying speed is 1D6x10+60, with an average speed of 90 (approx. 60 mph/96 km). Warriors and others are faster, while the Leaper and Digger are slower.
- The chitinous exoskeleton is covered with barbs and spines, most of them small to tiny. Average Horror Factor: 10.
- M.D.C. exoskeleton made of insect-like chitin. Fighting classes may augment their natural M.D.C. with Mega-Damage resin plating and/or resin cast weapons applied directly to the body.
- Unhatched eggs have one point of M.D.C.
- Last, but not least, unless noted otherwise, all Xiticix other than the Queens and Nannies are *male*. This is a natural safeguard to insure that the Queens are of the utmost importance and that the lesser males do everything in their power to keep the Queens safe. Without the Queens, the hive is doomed.



Larva Stage Xiticix

Nits

“I tell ya they lookt like maggits, but was more like the size of my dawg.”

— CS excerpt from the debriefing of Orion Greenfeld

Three months after an egg is laid, a Xiticix hatches from it. This “nit” is a larva-like baby that resembles a white, three foot (0.9 m) long lump of flesh. It is vaguely worm-like, has no legs, five tiny black dots for eyes and a slit for a mouth (a pair of tiny nubs indicate where the pincer mandibles will grow). The baby is completely helpless and is taken to the Nursery Chamber with hundreds, often thousands of other larvae.

Nits are not aggressive and will not attack except when they are trapped, terrified and see no other alternative. Even when they are attacked, their first instinct is to flee, but if such a course of action is not possible they will lash out (often ineffectually) with toothless bites. Nits never leave the Nursery Chamber and stay close to their care-givers. Like all babies, they spend 90% of their time eating, sleeping and growing.

Normally, the baby Xiticix remains in this weak, S.D.C. state for 12-14 months before it transforms in to the larger and lightly armored grub. It will take eight months as a grub before the creature begins to take on the vague appearance of its adult form, including the outline of wings beneath its skin. At the end of its second year (since hatching), the grub spins a cocoon. Thirty days after the pupa-state, a fully formed adult appears. However, it will take another year before the “young Xiticix” becomes a mature and full-powered adult.

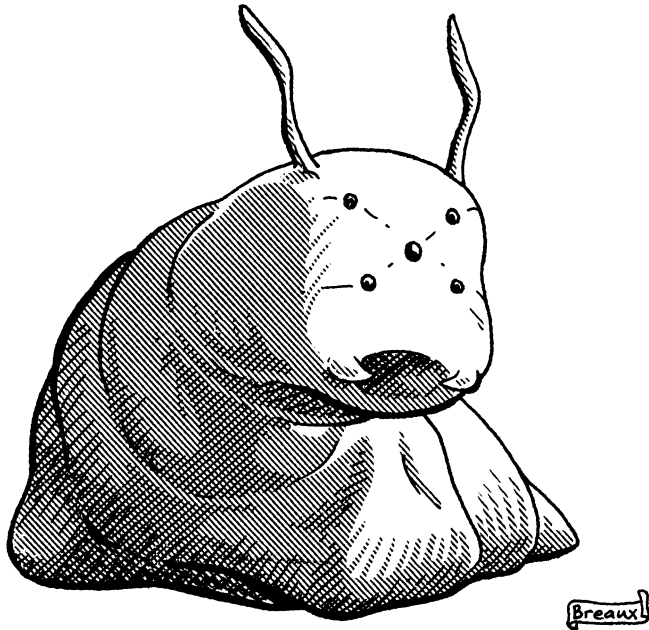
The babies (including grubs) are taken care of around the clock by Nannies and the Workers assigned to them. The Nannies function as nurses and the primary care-givers, while the Workers, who usually outnumber them three to one, assist in the feeding, caring and protection of the little slugs.

When a new hive is colonizing virgin territory, like Rifts Earth, it grows at an alarming rate. To help build the population quickly, the nits and grubs are fed a magic-laced nutrient known as “Sludge.” This food paste accelerates the growth process, producing a full grown Xiticix in 12-18 months, roughly half the normal time! The Xiticix Nannies are among the few who can make “Sludge;” the Queens are the only other.

Should the Nursery fall under attack, half the Nursery Workers rush forward to protect both the Nannies and the larvae, while the other half work with the Nannies to protect the babies. Depending on the situation, “protection” can mean any number of things. It may mean sacrificing one’s own life in battle to save the Nannies and the babies, holding off invaders until help can arrive or the young are moved, or sealing the entrance by collapsing part of the ceiling, and standing guard; killing any intruder who manages to get through.

Evacuation of the babies is standard procedure, with half the Workers (quickly joined by Warriors and other Xiticix) battling the intruder or dealing with the danger while Nannies and Workers gather up 2-4 nits or grubs in their arms and take them to a hidden chamber, different location or other safe haven. Once

a sufficient number of Warriors arrive to do all of the fighting, all other able bodies — Workers, Diggers, Leapers and even additional Warriors — all join in to evacuate and/or fight to protect the babies.



Nit-Stage Larva — effectively an infant

Alignment: Survival-minded creature, considered Miscreant.

Attributes: Not really applicable. Mental stats are animal or lower and physical ones are nebulous and undefined; all are effectively a three, with **Speed** a paltry six.

Size: Approximately 3 feet (0.9 m) long.

Weight: 50 lbs (22.5 kg).

M.D.C.: None.

Hit Points: 4D6

S.D.C.: 5D6; **A.R.:** 7

Horror Factor: 6 for an individual (it looks like an icky, big worm), and 8 if a dozen or more are found wiggling around, clustered together.

Average Life Span: One year before maturing into a grub.

Disposition: Hungry and slow-witted. It is a baby after all.

Natural Abilities: None.

R.C.C. Skills/Instincts: None.

Combat Skills: None.

Attacks Per Melee Round: One, via biting, which inflicts 1D6

S.D.C. Bonuses: None.

P.P.E.: 2D10

Grubs

“They’s musta been older ones or sumptin. Kinda like de mag-gits but wit some armor on em and lil’ claws.”

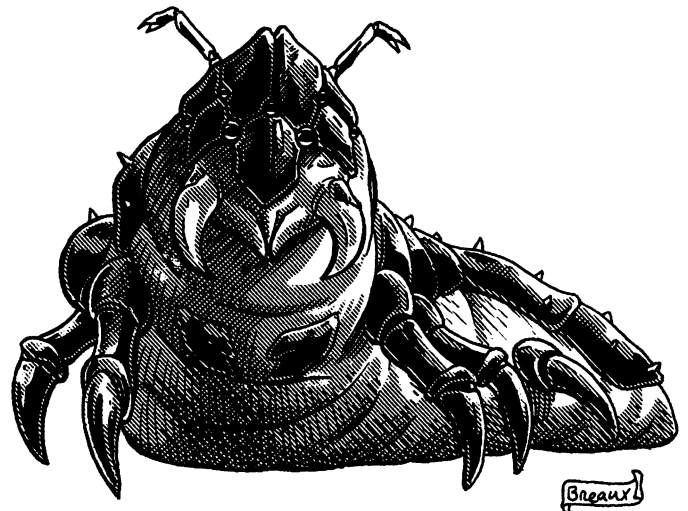
— *CS excerpt from the debriefing of Orion Greenfeld*

Approximately one year after hatching, a nit undergoes a transformation in which it begins to take on the more insect-like traits of its adult form. At this stage, the baby doubles in size, and the head, shoulders, back, and most of the legs are covered with a tough, spongy exoskeleton. Mandibles, six stumpy leg-like appendages and the rudimentary Xiticix head/face also develop.

The antennae are small, but distinctive and the skin color turns from white to a grayish tan color with darker patches of body armor. However, the creature’s ultimate shape is still undeterminable. That development comes later as the Xiticix steadily matures. Some have compared the grub to the equivalent of a “teenager” but this is not true, for the grub is more like a pre-teen, age 9-12. The so-called “young Xiticix” — the fully formed, but not completely, matured stage that comes later — is the equivalent of a teenager, with the exception that its “teen” period lasts only one year and it does not go through a rebellious stage.

Grubs remain in the Nursery Chambers with their younger, helpless siblings and may act as auxiliary guards in case of attacks. They are, of course, far from danger, but are capable of contributing to the defense of the Egg Chambers. Furthermore, grubs begin to exhibit the Xiticix’s notoriously aggressive nature, snapping at Workers and hissing in protest when they are told to do something they don’t want to do. As the grub gets older, it may actually sneak past its nursemaids and try to go exploring. If near the entrance to the Nursery, Warriors and other fighting class Xiticix may literally “kick” the grub back inside the Nursery. They don’t have the time nor inclination to be gentle. Besides, fighters believe it is best that the young learn and accept their place in Xiticix society at an early age. Workers, Diggers and other less war-like adults will pick up the grub and return it to one of the Nurseries.

After a year of development, the grub spins a cocoon and thirty days later emerges as a fully formed Xiticix. Up to a month before this point in its development, the young Xiticix can become any kind of adult, even a Queen if it is needed, because its exact species is not completely predetermined by genetics, but is instead influenced by the chemicals given off by the Elder Queen. Those chemicals are a kind of manpower request that ensures the needs of the hive are met in order to ensure its future.



Grub-Stage Larva — effectively an undeveloped child.

Alignment: Considered Anarchist or Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+2 and is considered to be in the same category as a supernatural predator, functioning on instinct more than intellect; M.E. 1D6+1, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 1D6+6, P.P. 1D6+2, P.E. 3D6, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 3D6 running (grubs do not have wings and can not fly).

Size: 5-6 feet (1.5 to 1.8 m).

Weight: Up to 200 lbs (91 kg) through year two and passing 300 lbs (136 kg) in year three.

M.D.C.: 6D6

Damage Capacity for Non-M.D.C. Worlds: 4D6 Hit Points and 1D4x10 S.D.C.; A.R.: 10.

Horror Factor: 9 for an individual and 11 for a group of a dozen or more.

Disposition: Determined and relentless. More animated than the nits, but not as intelligent as even the young adults.

Natural Abilities: Basic abilities of the Hard Eyes (range and M.D.C. are one third those of the adult and bonuses do not apply), can hear and communicate via ultrasonics (no other antennae abilities), and heals at a rate of 1D4 M.D.C. per 24 hours. No other abilities have developed to any notable levels yet.

R.C.C. Skills/Instincts: Basic, noncombat abilities as per the nature of the creature (i.e. Warrior skills for Warrior larvae, Nanny skills for Nanny larvae, and so on). However, these abilities are at the basic skill level and do not include the bonuses listed in parentheses.

Combat Abilities: The combat abilities of a grub are still pitiful compared to an adult. These Xiticix children will fight only in self defense or if ordered to do so by a Nanny, Warrior or Queen. Their battle tactics are straightforward and direct; they charge and bite. If a number of them are present, as is the case in most Nursery Chambers, they swarm and attack in bunches trying to bring down the target under their combined weight. Once in combat, the things rarely break off or give up and tend to fight to the death.

Attacks Per Melee Round: Two, via bites and/or slashing claws. Bite inflicts 4D6 S.D.C. and claw slashes do 3D6 S.D.C.

Bonuses: +1 to dodge.

P.P.E.: 3D6+10

Adult Xiticix

R.C.C.s

Xiticix by Hierarchy

Lowest to the Highest:

Larval Form: Nit

Larval Form: Grub

Worker

Digger

Leaper

Warrior

Hunter/Scout

Nannie/Nurse

Super-Warrior

Queen, Young

Queen, Elder

Breakdown of a Typical Xiticix Colony's Population

1 Elder Queen

2-100 Young Queens

4% Leapers

5% Super-Warriors

6% Hunters

9% Nannies

10% Diggers

30% Workers

36% Warriors

Note: Does not include unhatched eggs, nits or grubs.

Fighting Classes of Xiticix

Lowest to the Highest:

- Leapers — Secondary soldiers/grunts, scouts & Special Ops (mainly spying, surprise attacks and ambush).
- Warriors — Foot soldiers/grunts.
- Hunter/Scouts are the elite Special Ops of the Xiticix. They are effectively the scouts, intelligence gatherers and strategists. They also serve as the Captains to Colonels who lead Warriors and Leapers as well as direct and command other, lesser Xiticix (Workers, Diggers, etc.).
- Super-Warriors are the biggest, meanest, deadliest and most cunning of the Warrior Class. They serve as the Brigadier to Lieutenant Generals of the Xiticix forces. They also command and direct all Xiticix. Only the young and Elder Queens supersede their authority.

Note: Although not technically “fighters,” the young Queens are all effectively “Generals” in the Xiticix army, while the Elder Queen is regarded as the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. All Xiticix obey this chain of command without question or hesitation. Those who break the chain and/or defy the order of a superior, are destroyed on the spot.

Workers and other Xiticix are *not* members of the “fighting classes,” but regard those above them as their superiors and obey their commands. During times of need, they are marshalled as auxiliary fighting troops and automatically fight to defend the Hive Network, Queens and young.

Alphabetical List of Xiticix

The following Xiticix R.C.C. descriptions are presented in alphabetical order.

Digger

Hunter/Scout

Leaper

Nanny/Nurse

Queen: Young

Queen: Elder

Warrior

Warrior, Super

Worker

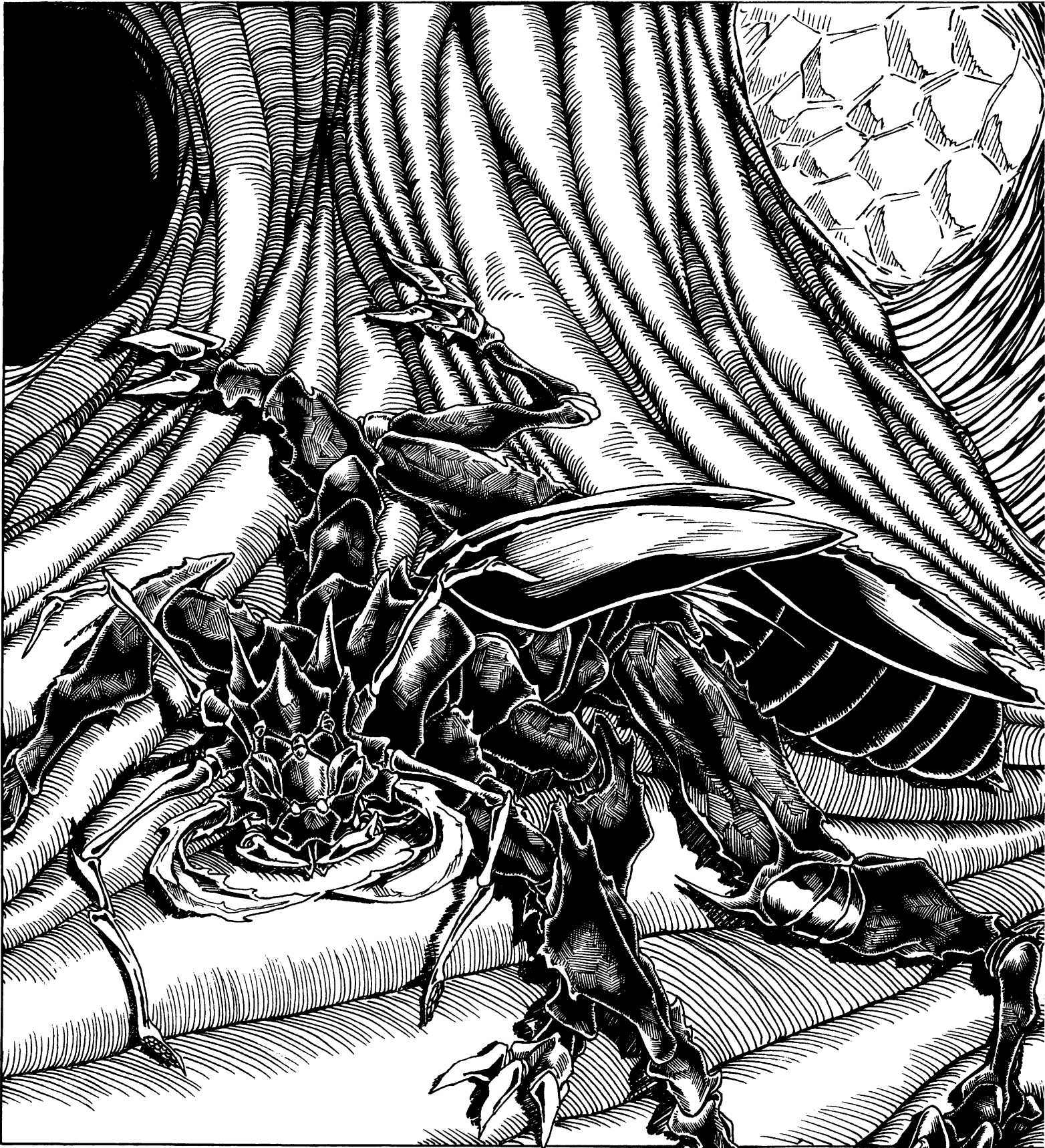
Xiticix Diggers

“Look like big beetles, if ya ask me. All hunched over and wigglin’ dere mouths and fingas to bild up dat mud. Sat fer a few minnits and watched . . . the group of ‘em musta added ten feet to dat wall while we wuz dere.”

— CS excerpt from the debriefing of Orion Greenfeld

Diggers are the builders and maintenance-bugs of the Xiticix hives. They have a spiny exoskeleton, four arms, two legs and a set of wings, and the same general features as other Xiticix, however, they are distinctly different and have the most insect-like appearance of them all. Diggers resemble giant beetles with a long, heavy body and a rather large and somewhat bulbous lower abdomen.

They spend much of their time hunched over and walk on four to all-six of their limbs, which contributes greatly to their insect appearance. Most of them have an iridescent sheen to their blackish-blue carapace and move with surprising speed and grace for a creature so large. Each hand has two wide fingers and an oppos-



able thumb. Unlike other Xiticix, their fingers do not end in pointed claws, but are thick and heavy. When the hand is opened, with the fingers held close together, they make excellent shovels for digging and moving earth, splitting rock, and working with their famous concrete-like resin used as the primary building material of the Xiticix race.



The Diggers' wings are concealed on their back underneath a set of long, smooth, armored plates just like those of a beetle. When Diggers find it necessary to fly, whether fleeing danger or moving quickly to another area of the hive, their wings unfold from under their armored covers. The thrumming sound their wings make is also the noisiest of the Xiticix.

The head is also larger and a bit different with a large pair of mandibles, a different mouth and a long pair of "feelers" that point down toward the mouth. The feelers are sometimes mistaken for an extra pair of antennae, but they lack anything other than tactile capabilities. These feelers, along with the mouth and hands are used to mold, shape, and smooth the secreted resin, as well as the making of weapons and repairs. They are, in effect, an extra pair of agile hands ideal for detailed work.

Diggers can burrow through the earth and cut through solid rock at a tremendous rate of speed. Yet at the same time, they can craft sturdy tunnels, archways, and chambers that are architecturally sound and won't cave in — often reinforced with their concrete resin. It is the Diggers' relentless task to construct the vast subterranean tunnels and defenses as well as the above-ground towers and bridges. Instinctive, masterful engineers and city planners, it is their job to create sufficient living space, achieve proper air circulation and make certain that the flow of traffic moves quickly and smoothly. Their work starts with the digging of the first tunnels and hollowing out the Queen's Chamber and Nursery. From that point forward, the Diggers are responsible for the proper expansion, growth and construction of the Hive Network, above and below ground. Diggers are constantly gnawing at the ground below, collapsing old tunnels, digging new ones, adding new chambers, modifying the traffic tunnels, and building new, exterior hive towers. The end result is a sprawling concrete city of towers and bridges on the surface and a subterranean labyrinth rarely seen by outsiders (well, outsiders who live to tell about it, anyway).

The structures on the surface have to be maintained and repaired much more frequently than those underground, mainly because the surface towers take the most punishment. The towers are the most obvious portion of the hive city and, as a result, the most frequently targeted for attack by surface dwelling humanoids. They also suffer wear and tear from the elements. Although they are made of M.D.C. material, these structures wear, deteriorate and suffer damage from enemy attacks — they are made of mud and resin after all.

In addition to their digging chores, these Xiticix are also responsible for maintenance and repairs, as well as the manufacturing of the infamous resin-based melee weapons (swords, spears, and so on). Of course, the Diggers don't do all this work by themselves. They command a legion of Workers to assist them in their tasks. In fact, nearly half of the Worker population serves Diggers. However, while these giants function in a design and supervisory capacity, Diggers are in the trenches laboring as much as any Worker under their charge.

Diggers will only engage in combat if they can not escape from an attacker, or if they are ordered to fight by a Queen, Nanny, Super-Warrior, or Hunter. The Call to Arms chemical will also urge them into action. However, their duty does not usually lie in battle but defenses, containing invaders, and, if it comes to it, assisting the Elder Queen, Nannies and the babies (eggs, nits and grubs) to make good their escape. Consequently, when a Hive Network is under siege, the Diggers engage in such tactics as sealing off chambers and strategic entranceways with their M.D.C. resin and/or rock and earth, adding walls, rerouting tunnels, and collapsing them. Sometimes a tunnel is collapsed right on top of the invaders, other times it is to seal off a particular segment of the colony to keep the invaders out (few attackers can quickly dig their way through tons of earth and rock), or to divide

the invading force (once an invading force is separated and divided into smaller groups, they are more easily contained and destroyed). Diggers and their Workers may also dig new tunnels to surprise the invaders and surround them or strike from behind, above or some other strategic position.

Although not designed for such a purpose, the large, powerful hands and mandibles of the Digger make deadly weapons, but the bug creature is far from an expert in their use in combat. The most common tactic used by these giant Xiticix is to lurch upward on their hind legs and bear down on an opponent, bringing their entire body down in one crushing blow. If the attack knocks the target down, or pins an opponent, the Digger will resort to biting with its mandibles while remaining on top of the enemy. In the alternative, they strike out with their shovel hands in karate-chop style punches. Surprisingly, even though it is the Diggers who make the weapons in the Xiticix's arsenal, these lumbering giants rarely consider using any.

Xiticix Digger R.C.C.

Alignment: Considered Anarchist.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+5 and is considered to be in the same category as a supernatural predator, functioning on instinct as much as intellect; M.E. 2D6+16, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 3D6+25, P.P. 1D6+8, P.E. 2D6+12, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 3D6+8 running or 1D6x10+40 flying, with an average flight speed factor of 70 (approx. 48 mph/77 km). All physical attributes are considered supernatural, including P.S. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for details other than the average Mega-Damages listings under *Hand to Hand Combat*.

Size: 8-9 feet (2.4 to 2.7 m) tall in its usual hunched over stance, 18 feet (5.5 m) standing (mostly) erect, and 20-22 feet (6 to 6.7 m) long. The Digger is also 4-5 feet (1.2 to 1.5 m) wide at the hips.

Weight: 1-2 tons!

M.D.C. by Location (Adult):

Main Body: 2D4x10+20 +P.E. number. Mature adults get an additional 2D6 M.D.C. per level of experience.

Eyes: Large (2) — 15 each

Eyes: Small (5) — 10 each

Antennae (2) — 15 each

Feelers (2) — 20 each

Arms (4) — 45 each

Legs (2) — 80 each

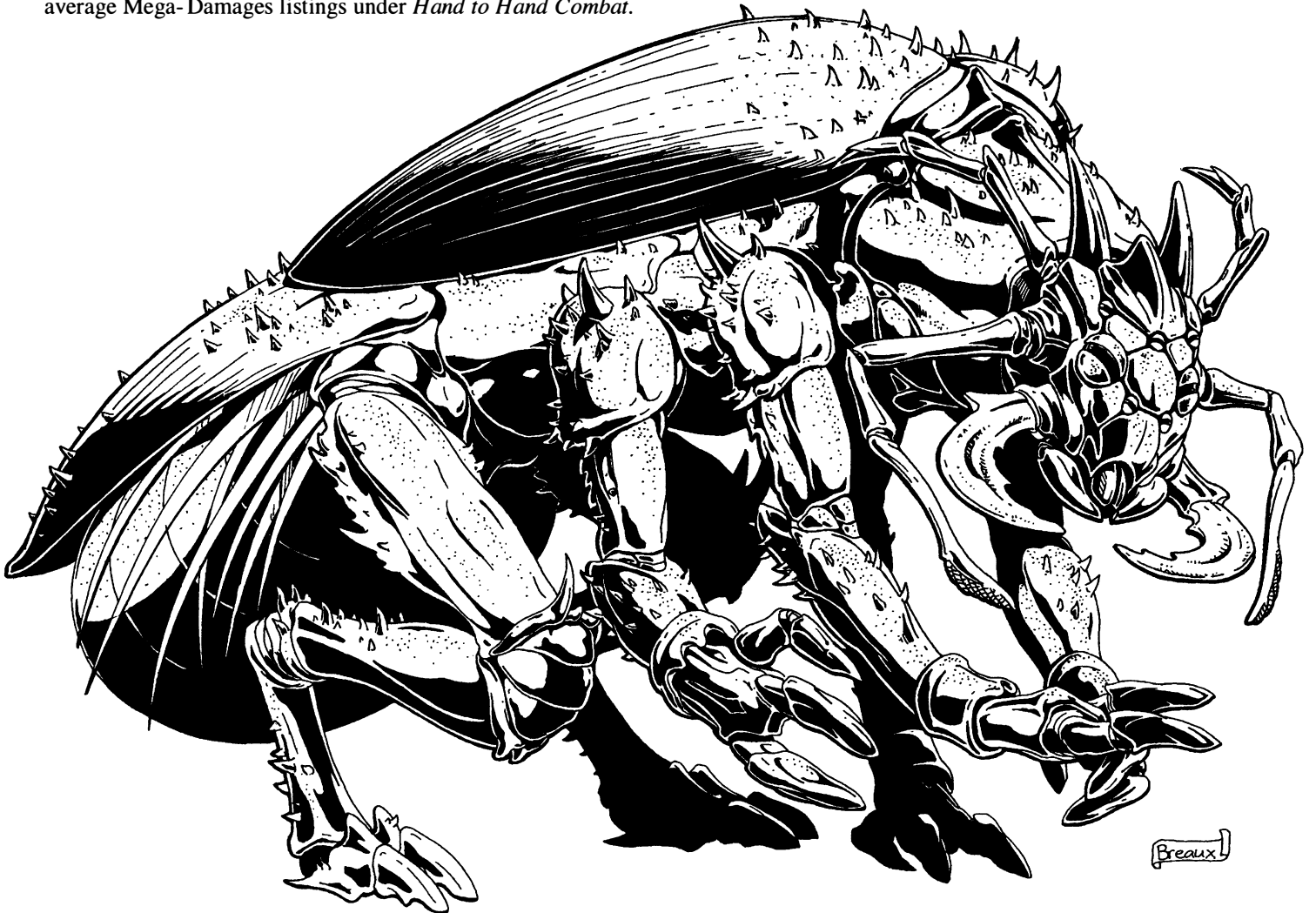
Wings (2) — 50 each

Wing Coverings (2; back) — 100 each

M.D.C. Resin Augmentation: The Digger never uses it on himself.

M.D.C. (Young): 1D4x10+10 for main body and all other appendages are roughly half those of the adult.

Damage Capacity for Non-M.D.C. Worlds: Young: P.E.x3 to determine Hit Points and 1D6x10+25 for S.D.C. Double for full grown adults +P.E. attribute number and 2D6 to Hit Points per level of experience. Antennae have 25 S.D.C. each, feelers 30, arms and wings 50 each, and legs 100. Armor Rating (A.R.): Young: 10, Mature Adult: 14.



Horror Factor: 10 for an individual, or 12 for groups of 10 or more.

Disposition: Largely non-aggressive and task absorbed. Generally tends to ignore intruders and will only release a Warning chemical if attacked.

Average Level of Experience: Typically 4-8th level, with 20% only 1-3rd level and 20% living long enough attain levels 9-15.

Natural Abilities: The standard abilities common to all Xiticix, plus the following.

1. Underground Sense of Direction (special): The character has an innate ability to tell direction when underground, even in total darkness (not applicable on the surface). Thus, the Digger can tell whether he is travelling up, down, diagonally, or level, the approximate angle of decline or ascent, the approximate depth below the surface, and the approximate direction (north, south, east, west). This skill also enables the Digger to judge the approximate location to surface structures (natural and artificial), but *only* if the insect alien is familiar with the area — and Diggers are intimately familiar with “their” Hive Network. The character will also recognize traits and aspects of the underground tunnel or construct that serve as landmarks for him. **Base Skill:** 72% +2% per level of experience; -25% if in an unfamiliar subterranean setting.

2. Digging, Tunneling, and Excavating (special):

Digging: The Xiticix can dig through the ground, leaving no passable tunnel behind him (only he can move through the ground using this power) at the rate of 20 feet (6.1 m) per melee round (15 seconds) through dirt or sand, 12 feet (3.7 m) per melee round through hard, packed earth, clay or ground mixed with stones or other debris or obstruction (i.e. rocks or junk, thick tree roots, etc.). Five feet (1.5 m) per melee round chopping through stone or rock. **Base Skill:** 88% +1% per level of experience.

Tunneling: This type of digging and building is done at half the rate of standard digging, but leaves a permanent tunnel to be used by others. In most cases, the tunnel is roughly the size of the Digger when hunched into its walking and digging position, about 4-5 feet (1.2 to 1.5 m) wide and 8-10 feet (2.4 to 3 m) tall. However, many tunnels are larger; 10-15 feet (3 to 4.6 m) wide by 12-18 feet (3.6 to 5.5 m) tall. Small tunnels, sometimes barely round enough to fit a single Warrior crawling through it, are dug by the Workers under a Digger’s instruction.

In addition, the character can usually tell if an existing tunnel or chamber is a natural formation, whether or not it was dug by Xiticix and if its new, old, or ancient. **Base Skill:** 80% +2% per level of experience.

Creating a simple, earthen tunnel or passageway is pretty quick and easy, but the most important and frequently travelled tunnels will be reinforced and covered with the Xiticix’s concrete-like resin. Likewise, support beams, cornerstones, and archways, as well as the exterior towers, are typically made of the M.D.C. material. It is the Digger who makes the beams and supplies the concrete-like material, but it is the Workers who apply it to the walls, with one or more Diggers supervising production and working on the key supports and construction.

Excavation & Architectural Engineering: The building of small to large rooms, huge chambers, crude stairs and ramps, walls, traps, and tapping into underground water supplies, as well as exploratory digs, reconstruction of collapsed tunnels and such, require excavation and architectural engineering skills/abilities.

Diggers can excavate 20 cubic feet (.57 cubic meters) of Earth per minute or two. However, reinforcing the room afterward requires ten times longer. A full crew of Workers can also cover it with M.D.C. resin in about the same amount of time. **Base Skill:** 80% +2% per level of experience.

Making traps is also part of this skill ability. Tunneling and excavating can be used to make pit traps or to weaken floors or ceilings. Traps like these are not common, but do exist in most subterranean networks. A favorite tactic is to collapse a section of tunnel or drop a ceiling on a group of invaders. Water traps are also sometimes used. **Base Skill:** 72% +2% per level of experience.

Note: M.D.C. material can not be easily or quickly dug, tunneled, or excavated, but can be punched through, gnawed or chipped away and torn down. However, this takes time and manpower, with a best possible speed of 10 cubic feet (0.28 cubic meters or 0.9 sq. 9) per 1D4+3 minutes.

3. Building (special): In addition to digging, tunneling and tearing down, the Digger is also an instinctive architectural engineer. However, most of the creature’s “intuitive” designs are limited to the specific needs of the Hive Colony and limited to the surface towers and bridges, and underground tunnels, chambers and constructs. Towers are built one level and one room at a time from the bottom up.

Diggers directly use the concrete-like resin (typically mixed with S.D.C. mud/earth to double the available amount of the light M.D.C. material) as their primary building tool. A single Digger can produce enough resin mixed with mud to make an 18 foot (5.5 m) wall section or to thinly cover/coat a 50 foot (15.2 m) area each melee round (15 seconds). However, it will take him an hour to properly form that wall section or build a support. By the time it is done, the resin will be nearly hardened (another fifteen minutes or so and it will be). While resin is the main building material used by the Xiticix, the Digger can also use stone and clay to make building bricks or use them for a foundation, as well as wood and scraps from (M.D.C. and S.D.C.) vehicles and humanoid buildings torn down and recycled. Typically such non-Xiticix materials are used as a base or foundation and covered with the resin mix, earth, mud or clay.

Make Weapons: Diggers, with the help of Workers operating under their explicit direction, use full strength resin to make M.D.C. melee weapons. Most are hand-held weapons, but fighting class Xiticix, particularly Super-Warriors and the older Warriors, often have the Digger augment their natural M.D.C. exoskeleton with Mega-Damage resin plating as well as have resin cast weapons (blades, spikes, and barbs) applied directly to their bodies. This is done to:

a) provide additional M.D.C. protection (typically equal to 20-40% of their natural M.D.C. and typically placed at strategic locations such as the forearms, shoulders, chest, belly, etc.);

b) add to their arsenal of weapons with knuckle spikes or blades, forearm blades, elbow and knee spikes (M.D. is the same as the equivalent weapon, typically doing 1D6 or 2D6 M.D.); and

c) to add to their fearsome visage; +1 or +2 to Horror Factor depending on the elaborateness of these attachments and additions.

4. Produce M.D.C. Bonding Resin (special): Only the Digger and the Queens can produce the M.D.C. resin used to build the Hive Network, but the Digger is specialized for the task and can produce greater quantities more frequently, does it faster



and makes a stronger resin. This substance on its own is very tough, but limited in supply, thus requiring its mixture with mud/clay/earth in the construction of the hive's Towers and subterranean fortifications. A six-

foot (1.8 m) glob of the stuff — weighing roughly 100 lbs (45 kg) and enough to cover an average man — would have approximately 250 M.D.C. when made into a pillar of pure resin about the size and half the thickness of a man. It can also be spread out to cover or make a 20 square foot (1.9 square meters) wall, one or two inches (2.5 to 5 cm) thick. However, when spread out into a large thin "sheet" the Mega-Damage Capacity is reduced, averaging out to about 62 M.D.C. per 10 square foot (0.9 m) section.

The resin is almost always mixed with ordinary mud. This binds the S.D.C. substance with the M.D.C. resin, effectively doubling the amount of the M.D.C. building material. However, it also "cuts" the strength of the original Mega-Damage material to roughly half the M.D.C. As a result, a man-sized pillar would have 125 M.D.C. and a 10 square foot (0.9 square meter) section of wall, 1-3 inches (2.5 to 7.5 cm) thick, would have roughly 30-34 M.D.C. Pure resin construction is a rarity, and used only to make the base of the towers, critical support beams and to cover the walls of the Elder Queen's Chamber and Nurseries. To stretch the building material farther, the exterior towers and structures may be made of S.D.C. materials coated in the mixed resin. These structures (roughly 40-50% of the outer towers) have half the M.D.C. noted (15-17 M.D.C. per 10 square foot/0.9 square meter area).

A retarding enzyme secreted by the Digger makes the resin a soft, workable paste that resembles mud or concrete, and length-

ens the amount of time it takes to dry and harden. The mud/resin mix is worked with the hands, feelers and mandibles of the Digger, with Xiticix Workers who use their hands and a variety of tools. The Digger releases another enzyme to completely remove it from their appendages. Diggers are often seen cleaning up in this manner by apparently "licking" their "lips," feelers and hands. **Note:** A single Digger can produce up to 2000 pounds (one ton/900 kg) of pure resin (2 tons of the more commonly available "mixed resin") every 24 hours.

5. Resin Glob Attack (special): In combat, the Digger can spit a 3 foot (0.9 m) glob of the resin once per melee round. When using it offensively, the Digger will not add in the slow drying enzyme so the paste-like goo hardens in a minute or two. Diggers often use the glob attack to slow and/or incapacitate an opponent. They may also use it to adhere an opponent (especially if momentarily incapacitated) or stationary vehicle to the wall or floor. Who needs handcuffs or chains when you can exude and spit fast drying M.D.C. resin?!

As noted, each glob represents about three feet (0.9 m) of resin which is enough to cover roughly half of a human-sized target. A creature must be covered halfway to suffer the penalties listed below. And to be restrained completely, the character must be "globbed" twice, once at the feet and legs, and once above the waist. Meanwhile, a twelve foot (3.6 m) creature would have to be spit on twice just to cover the feet and legs, and four times to have his entire body covered from shoulders to toes.

Rate of Attack: Once every round/15 seconds, with each glob attack counting as one of the creature's melee actions/attacks.

Range: 40 feet (12.2 m).

Damage: None per se, but the heavy goop clings to the clothes, body armor and the body and impairs movement. Moreover, it is very sticky, difficult to remove and quickly hardens in 1D4+1 melee rounds (30-75 seconds)!

Penalty modifiers on the victim when the lower body/legs and feet are targeted.

- The victim is -10% to speed and initiative is -1 for the first two melee rounds. The victim can feel the material getting firm and less giving with each passing second. This is the time to remove it!

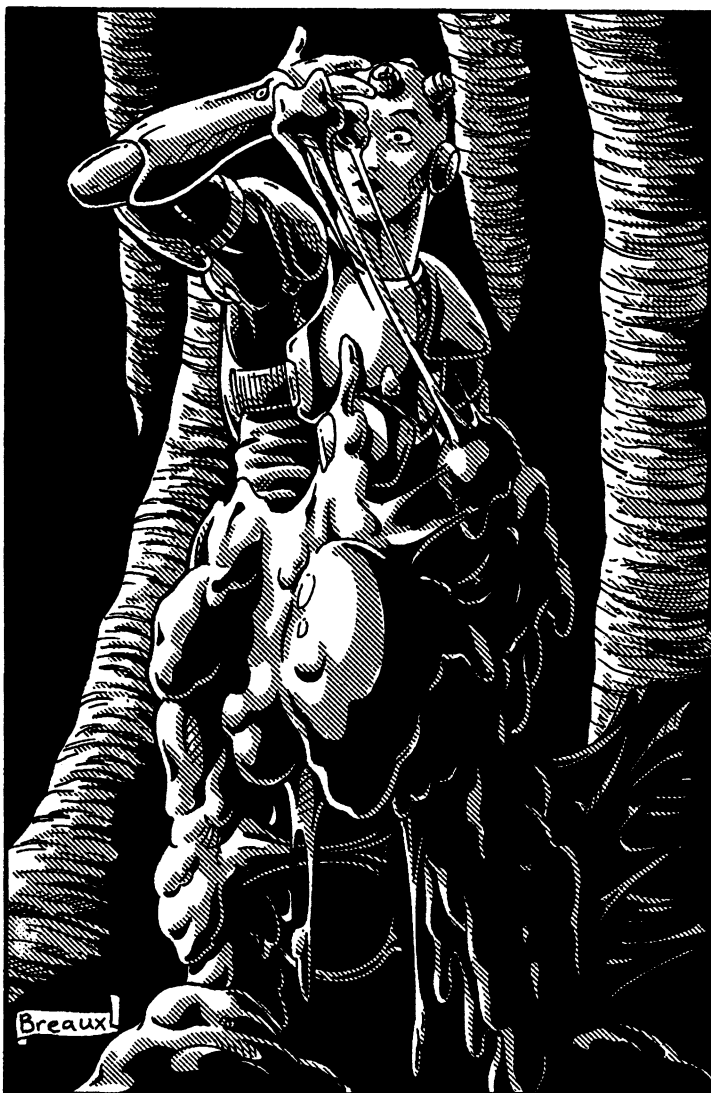
Getting the stuff off while it is still soft uses up 1D4+6 melee actions, and there will still be a thin coating with small clumps stuck to the character like caked mud (only it's hard as concrete and will not flake or brush off). However, there is not enough to impair movement, only mar or ruin clothing, shoes or armor.

Removal can be accomplished by scraping the glob away with a knife or other type of blade, shovel, scrap metal, or even a wooden stick. Turpentine, gasoline, or paint thinner will help to reduce the stickiness and aid with the removal; takes only six melee actions instead of 6+1D4. However, the glob is thick, heavy and sticks to everything, especially fingers, hands and cloth. Flicking the gunk off a weapon, tool, stick or one's own hands is extremely difficult and some of the stuff will stay stuck to it unless quickly wiped clean with a cloth. There is a good chance that unprotected fingers will get stuck together, making the use of weapons impossible. Again the use of turpentine or gasoline while even slightly pliable will help in its removal.

Note: Getting the "enzyme" fluid released by the Digger will dissolve even hardened resin, but also does 1D6 S.D.C.

damage to the skin or fabric. This enzyme is contained in a gland in the Digger's throat. A live Digger can be forced to secrete the substance by manipulating its throat or killed and the gland with the enzyme removed. The Coalition States have a synthetic chemical equivalent used by troops and Medical teams assigned to go against the Xiticix. This material is not known to the Black Market or other people and is manufactured and used exclusively by the CS.

- By the third melee round the substance is like thick, rapidly drying paste that binds the joints and connects the legs. -50% to speed, -30% to balance, reduce initiative by half, the climb and swim skills by half, and leaping, gymnastics and acrobatics are impossible! At this stage, the resin glob is hard on the outside and stiffening quickly, like nearly dried taffy or molten plastic that is rapidly hardening in the cool air.
- By the 4th melee round, the glob becomes as hard and stiff as a rock (or close to it), making joints covered in the gunk stiff and unable to bend. The victim is effectively wearing "cement trousers" if the stuff has been partially removed or encased in a "cement" mound if none or little of it has been removed. Having one's legs and feet encased in cement makes mobility impossible. Speed is zero, and all combat bonuses (if any) are reduced to +1. Obviously running, leaping, dodging, swimming, acrobatics and gymnastics are impossible! The only climbing one can do is rappelling at -50% due to the awkward weight holding one down and the inability to use one's legs.



After the resin hardens, it requires 100 M.D.C. of damage to remove. This can be done with carefully placed energy blasts, explosives, M.D. punches, chiseling and so forth, but whatever method is used, one must be careful not to injure the person underneath.

Penalty modifiers on the victim when the upper body and arms are targeted. The glob hits squarely in the chest, covering the torso and arms up to the neck.

- For the first two melee rounds, the victim loses one attack and all combat bonuses are reduced by half, including the firing of long-range energy weapons. Likewise, skills that require the use of one's hands are performed at -20%. The victim can feel the material becoming firm and less giving with each passing second. This is the time to remove it! Getting rid of the glob is the same as above and requires 1D4+6 melee actions (six if turpentine, paint thinner or gasoline is available).
- By the third melee round, the substance is like thick, rapidly drying paste or thick taffy that binds the joints, sticks to and pulls the limbs to the body, weighs down the arms and causes the fingers to stick together. -25% to speed, -20% to balance, and reduce the number of attacks, initiative and combat bonuses by half! The climb and swim skills are -70%, and the performance of skills requiring the hands and arms are -50%. At this stage, the resin glob is hard and leathery on the outside and stiffening quickly.
- By the 4th melee round the glob becomes as hard and stiff as a rock. Joints are welded in place by the hard, unbending crust. The victim is effectively wearing a "cement overcoat," his limbs frozen in whatever position they were in when the glob hardened. This can give the character the appearance of being a living scarecrow or a runaway patient in a body cast. Speed and balance are reduced by half, all combat bonuses (if any) are reduced to +1, and attacks per round are down to only two! Climbing and using one's arms and hands are impossible, as is performing any skills that require the use of one's hands.

After the resin hardens, it requires 100 M.D.C. of damage to remove. This can be done with carefully placed energy blasts, explosives, M.D. punches, chiseling and so forth, but whatever method is used, one must be careful not to injure the person underneath.

Penalty Modifiers on the Victim when the "head" is covered. Thankfully, since the Digger and Queens are not instinctive fighters, they do not fight to kill and are usually satisfied with stopping or trapping their adversary. This means that neither the Digger nor the Queen will intentionally spit resin on the head of an opponent unless they have witnessed their adversary use some form of dangerous attack that originates from the head, such as flaming breath or energy blasts that shoot from the eyes. The Queen will not hesitate in "globbing" the head (the victim will suffocate and die in five minutes). However, the Digger is not savvy enough to do so on his own. A Queen, Hunter, Warrior, or other authority figure would have to suggest the tactic to the Digger.

Any creature whose head is encased in the thick glob will begin to suffocate even before the resin hardens. Quick action is needed as the average human or D-Bee will lose consciousness in two or three minutes and die from suffocation in five. Only those who don't need to breathe air (via magic or supernatural nature) can hold their breath for a longer period than a human, or those who have an independent oxygen sup-

ply via cybernetics or environmental body armor can survive longer. Likewise, those wearing a helmet with a face mask/visor/air filter may catch an air pocket and have 1D4 extra minutes of air. Even an M.D.C. creature can suffocate, although it typically takes 10-100 times longer, and many supernatural beings don't need to breath air.

Once hardened, 80 M.D.C. must be inflicted to chisel the rock hard resin off. And pounding or blasting away at the head will be like punching the character, causing 1D6 points of damage direct to Hit Points (or 1D6+1 M.D.C. damage to Mega-Damage creatures) per each blast or pounding/hammering/punching blow. This means one could kill the victim in the rescue attempt. Likewise, a misplaced energy blast might vaporize more than the rock-like covering. **Note:** Elemental magic such as Rock to Mud, Crumble Rock and even Stone to Flesh are especially handy in removing resin.

Any character whose head is incased in the goo can not see (blind), hear or speak and is -10 on all combat moves and -80% on the performance of most physical skills. He will probably need outside help to survive, although if one of his hands are free, he can wipe away enough or place his hand on his face in such a way as to keep an air passage/hole open. Quick action might also wipe and keep enough of the oozing slop from covering one of the eyes.

6. Types of Chemical Excretions: Colony Identification, Chemical Alarm, Resin (with the special enzyme to slow the hardening process) and Trail Scent.

Psionics: Considered a Minor Psychic with the powers of Ectoplasm, Levitation (both used to make weapons and assist in building), Resist Fatigue, Telepathy, Mind Block and Summon Inner Strength.

I.S.P.: M.E. x2 +1D6 per level of experience.

R.C.C. Skills (equivalent to instincts): Wilderness Survival (+10%), Land Navigation (+20%), Aerial Navigation (+15%), Basic Math (+40%), Military Fortifications (basic stuff; +20%), General Repair/Maintenance (as it pertains to Xiticix items; +20%), Sculpt/Whittle (+15%), Trap Construction (+10%), Trap/Mine Detection (+20%), W.P. Blunt and one W.P. Ancient skill of choice, excluding Archery.

Attacks Per Melee Round: Four attacks per melee round.

Bonuses (in addition to possible Attribute & Natural Ability Bonuses): +1 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 to dodge, +3 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, +3 to save vs possession, and is +7 to save vs poison and disease.

Weapon Notes: Rarely uses any of the traditional Xiticix weapons, but may consider anything handy in a pinch, including rocks.

Hand to Hand Combat: The supernatural P.S. of the Digger means that punches do Mega-Damage. The damage listings below are representative of an "average" Digger's strength, and may increase for those that are extraordinarily strong (36 P.S. or higher. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for actual damages).

Restrained Punch: 5D6 S.D.C.

Normal Punch: 4D6 M.D.

Power Punch: 1D4x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks).

Bite Attack: 4D6 M.D.

Special Lunging Attack/Body Slam: 1D6x10 M.D., but counts as two melee attacks and must be used as the first attack of the round.

P.P.E.: 1D6x10

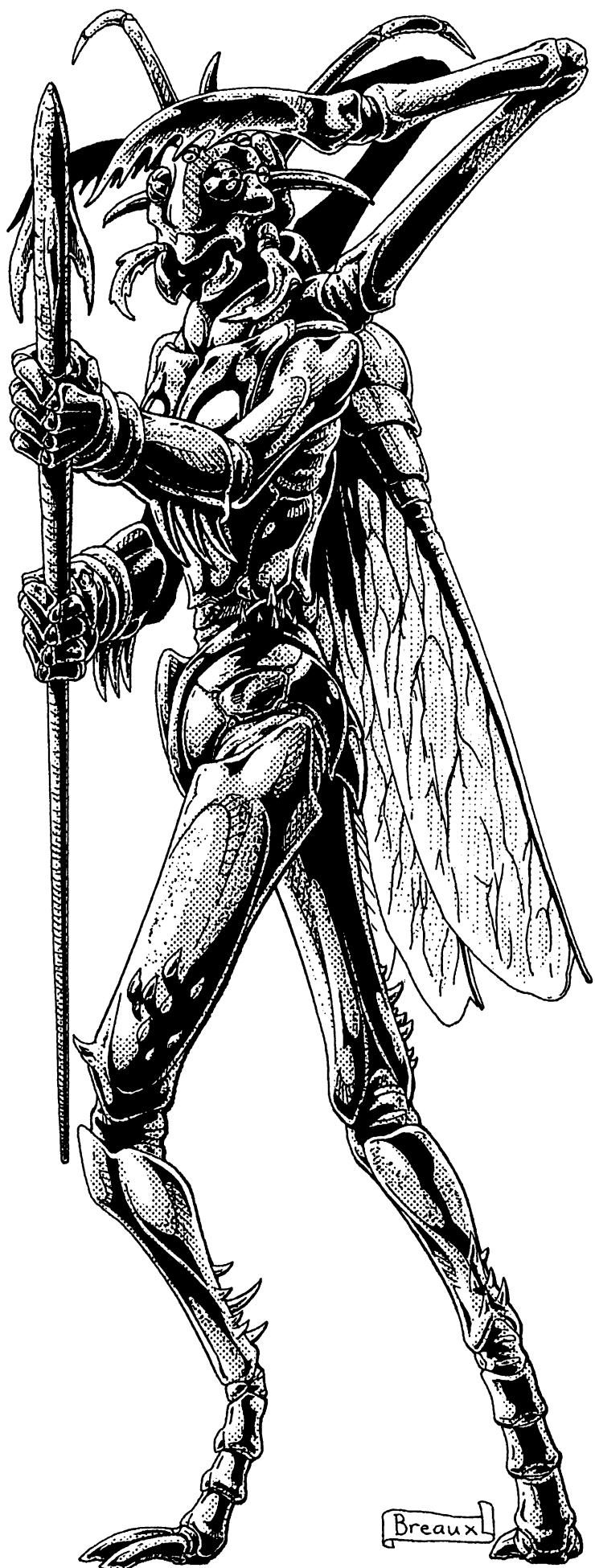
Xiticix Hunter

"Well, that's why we went to the damn hive in the first place. Dat green sum-of-a-gun dropped in an' squirted ol' Rollie wit sumting. Course only Bert, the doggie boy could smell it, but next day they come and scooped him up. Four of 'em. Jus' come down, grabbed him an' flew away pretty as you please. O' course, my fellow idjits figgered we hadda go 'n save 'im. That's why we snuck into the damn hive. Musta been a touch crazy dat day."

— Excerpt from the CS debriefing of Orion Greenfeld

The Hunter/Scout is the only Xiticix who functions as a true lone-wolf, going forth as lone individuals, pairs, or small groups of 3-6 (Warriors and other Xiticix usually travel in "squads," small bands of 6-12 Xiticix or swarms of hundreds to thousands). Except when *leading* Warriors or other Xiticix, Hunters rarely associate with their fellow insectoids, preferring to be out living along the perimeter of the Hive Colony's borders or beyond. They do associate with other Xiticix, particularly the fighting classes where they serve as Captains, scouts and strategic advisors. However, whenever possible, most prefer to be out exploring or scouting where they can quietly observe non-Xiticix travelers (potential intruders), gather intelligence and make surgical strikes against the enemy (in the latter case they are likely to lead mixed squads of other Xiticix). This has led many humans to think of Hunters as the Xiticix's "Special Ops Rangers" who engage in reconnaissance, spying, sabotage, assassination and Commando-style tactical raids. This is an apt analogy for it is, indeed, the Hunter who goes on deep scouting missions up to 500 miles (800 km) away from the Hive Network, often spending weeks away from the hive hunting and marking targets. They also lead special task forces, assault teams, search and destroy missions, rescue operations and scout ahead of raiding parties or warring swarms to observe the enemy and gather intelligence. **Note:** The enemy can be members of a rival Xiticix colony to CS troops, demons, humanoid adventurers, or an innocent humanoid community or travelers who have unwittingly infringed on the borders of Xiticix territory. In most cases a "perceived threat" is sufficient cause to invoke the wrath of the Xiticix and deadly force.

The Hunter will usually watch the "enemy" from the best vantage point available while remaining hidden. Most are gutsy enough to prowl in close to scout around the perimeter of an enemy camp or into the heart of town to assess the situation to the fullest. The Hunter(s) makes special note of enemy movement, patterns, defenses, and numbers, as well as to assess their strengths and weaknesses. When the creature feels it has gathered sufficient information, or it has been discovered, the Hunter silently slips away to either return to the Hive Network or to locate the nearest squad of Xiticix Warriors. In either case, this nefarious scout immediately begins to formulate a strategy of attack, reports all he has witnessed to his squadron, swarm or teammates back at the hive, and makes suggestions and recommendations regarding how a large group of Xiticix should address this *danger*. Remember, all non-Xiticix life forms are generally regarded as a threat to be chased away or destroyed. The scout will precisely indicate the location of the "threat" (probably having left a scent trail Warriors can follow blindfolded) and suggest strategies and tactics to best rout or destroy the enemy. This information is then used to formulate a plan of



action typically implemented by a squad, platoon or company of Warriors and other Xiticix fighters. The Hunter making the report, may or may not accompany them. When a Super-Warrior is not available to lead the assault force, that Hunter, or a different one (sometimes a Leaper) may choose to lead them into combat and direct their activities. CS troops, Psi-Stalkers and others who regularly combat Xiticix have learned (usually the hard way) to do whatever it takes to kill these stealthy spies. To allow one to escape is to invite an attack from a larger Xiticix force sometime during the next 24 hours. Even loosing the "Death Scent" is better than letting the Hunter escape to share the knowledge he has collected. The wisest characters will also move their camp after killing one or more Hunters, and make certain to wash the "Death Scent" from their bodies and possessions.

Hunters may also attack or engage in sabotage or reconnaissance on their own at any given time. Pairs and small groups of 3-6 or those accompanied by Leapers or Warriors are more likely to engage threats and enemies using ambushes, hit and run-tactics and sabotage. Hunters can be as silent, cunning and deadly as any assassin, however, as a rule, they tend to command and direct other Xiticix from a distance rather than engage in direct combat themselves. They are clever, observant, cautious and rarely fight to the death. However, when defending a hive, all Xiticix, including Hunters, will fight to the death in its defense.

Marking Targets

One of the specialized duties of the Hunters is to seek out non-Xiticix life forms with high levels of P.P.E. (10 points or greater; the higher the better). Such individuals are then attacked, pacified (beaten into submission or unconsciousness), captured and taken back to the hive. Here prisoners are restrained, usually via resin bonds, vines or rope, slain and eaten by Nannies within 72 hours to make into "Sludge." In this capacity, the Hunters are vital to the propagation of the species, for only with a constant supply of P.P.E. based Sludge can the accelerated growth of the nits be maintained. Practitioners of magic, Faerie Folk and demons are ideal because of their high level of P.P.E., but are also the most difficult to subdue and capture. They are also the most dangerous to keep in captivity, so they are usually the first to be turned into Sludge. Dragons and other beings with more than 200 P.P.E. points are usually viewed as too dangerous to bring back to the Hive Network and typically left alone unless they are menacing, in which case they are attacked and destroyed. Xiticix may not use magic, but understand it as a dangerous force and recognize those who use it.

When a Hunter locates a promising humanoid with lots of P.P.E., he will attempt to spray the target with a special chemical "marking" agent produced only by the Hunters. The chemical has no noticeable scent to humans, but can be smelled by other Xiticix, and faintly by Dog Boys and others endowed with a heightened sense of smell. It is difficult to wash off but will wear off over a period of two weeks. Only herbalists and alchemists might be able to neutralize the undetectable scent if they know it is there, and if they have a sample of a Xiticix chemical gland to work with (doesn't necessarily have to be a Hunter's gland, but if it isn't, there will be steep penalties as decided by the Game Master). This "scent marking" is one of the things the Warriors and Leapers search for while they are out on patrols. If they should happen to detect it, they will home in on it (if it is within the two mile/3.2 km sensing range) and attempt to capture the

“marked” target alive for transport to the hive. Leapers and other Hunters are especially sensitive to the scent.

Hunters are cunning and capable warriors, so even a lone Hunter will consider trying to attack a lone target rich in P.P.E. However, if the target offers strong resistance, he/she/it will be “marked” and the Hunter will flee in retreat. If the “marked” victim is within a group and the Hunter or squadron of Xiticix can not get him alone, they will attack the group with the sole purpose of snaring the chosen one. Once the target is snagged, one or more Xiticix will try to fly away with him, first to separate him from his companions and, second, to subdue him without the intervention of comrades. With any luck, the marked individual will be subdued and en route to the Hive Network before his friends can prevent it. Remember, Hunters are very cunning and excellent at strategy and tactics, enabling them to arrange for distractions, decoys, etc., to separate and trick their opponents. Furthermore, as military commanders among the Xiticix, Hunters can command small squads to groups numbering into the hundreds to do their bidding. When faced with small squad combat and/or requiring surprise and stealth, they often turn to a squadron consisting of 3-4 Leapers, 1-3 additional Hunters and a support team of 3-6 Warriors (the latter strike only after the Leapers and Hunters spring the attack and grab the target).

Hunters are immediately distinguishable from their fellow Xiticix by several characteristics. The most striking and immediate difference is the green color of their exoskeletons. Most other Xiticix are a gray color with a slight greenish or blue tint to it, but the Hunters are completely and obviously grass green to evergreen. They also have a unique head shape with three long horns or spikes, one in the center of the head, like a unicorn, and the other two on the sides of the head, near the temple where the truncated feelers are found on the Warriors and other Xiticix. They have four arms, but their second set is located on the upper back above the wings, and instead of ending in hands, this pair of appendages have deadly, curved, serrated blade- or scythe-like natural weapons. These scythe-like limbs are used to parry, slash and stab in melee combat as well as impale, pin and hold prey out of the way as it flies or continues to engage others in combat. The antennae are also different, being twice as long and half as thick as the Warriors’ and many other Xiticix. The body of the Hunter is thinner and less heavily armored than the Warriors. Likewise, the Hunter’s legs are comparatively spindly and end in a pair of tiny feet.

Xiticix Hunter R.C.C.

Alignment: Most humanoids consider them Diabolic evil, but in truth these obsessively self-serving warriors are Anarchist. And when it comes to the Hive Colony they are completely loyal and selfless.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6+8 and is considered to be in the same category as a supernatural predator, functioning on instinct as much as intellect; M.E. 1D6+21, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 2D6+18, P.P. 2D6+18, P.E. 1D6+12, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 4D6+12 running, 1D6x10+120 flying (for a speed factor of 130 to 180 or (approx. 90 to 124 mph/144 to 198 km). All physical attributes are considered supernatural, including P.S.; see the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for complete details regarding Supernatural P.S. and damage.

Size: 7 feet (2.1 m).

Weight: 400 lbs (180 kg).

M.D.C. by Location (Adult):

Main Body: 1D4x10+20 +P.E. number. Mature adults get an additional 1D6 M.D.C. per level of experience.

Eyes: Large (2) — 15 each

Eyes: Small (5) — 10 each

Antennae (2) — 15 each

Arms (4) — 40 each

Legs (2) — 50 each

Wings (2) — 50 each

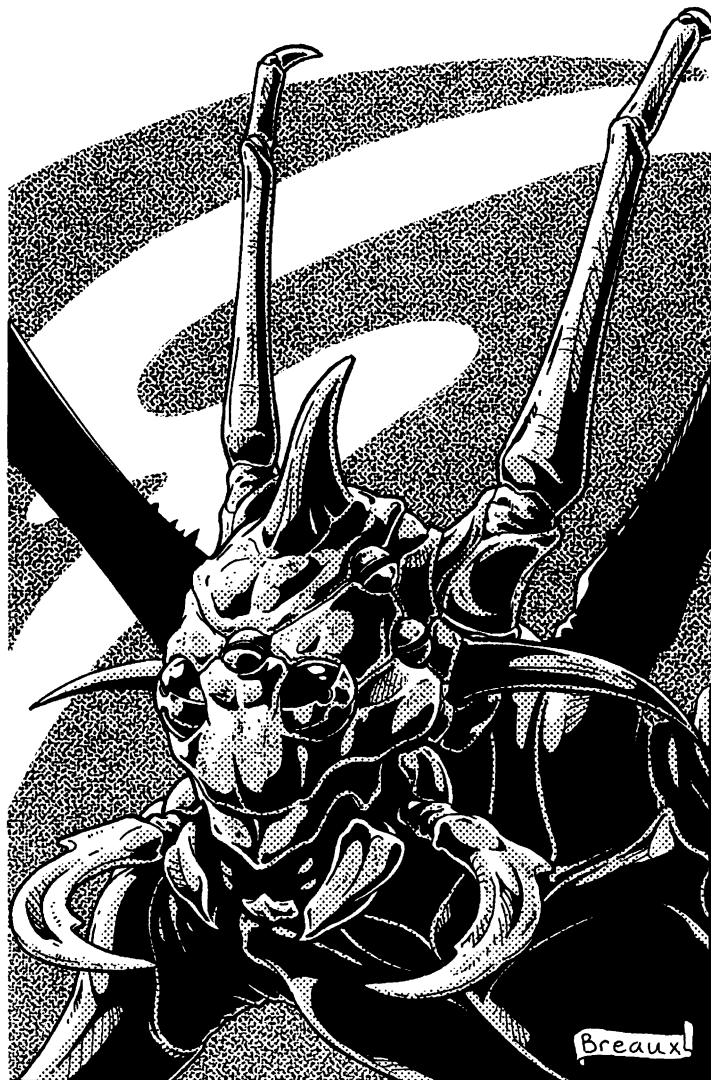
M.D.C. Resin Augmentation: Can increase M.D.C. of Main Body by 10%-30%.

M.D.C. (Young): 4D6+8 for main body and all other appendages are roughly half those of the adult. Young do not use resin augmentation.

Damage Capacity for Non-M.D.C. Worlds: Young: P.E.x2 to determine Hit Points and 3D6+6 for S.D.C. Double for full grown adults +P.E. attribute number and 1D6 to Hit Points per level of experience. Antennae have 15 S.D.C. each, arms and wings 35 each, and legs 50. Armor Rating (A.R.): Young: 9, Mature Adult: 13.

Horror Factor: 10, or 13 for a group of 10 or more.

Disposition: Silent and calculating. Hunters are not as overtly aggressive or as easy to provoke as Warriors, Leapers or even Super-Warriors. However, they can be just as ruthless and merciless in combat, especially in self-defense or when defending a Queen.



What makes them *seem* less aggressive and dangerous is their cool, calm and calculating demeanor. They rarely rush into combat, usually try to size-up the opposition and fight using cunning, tactics and trickery. As a leader and strategist, a Hunter leading a Xiticix squadron often stays out of combat and lets his troops do all or most of the fighting. They will also *seem* to flee when their squad is destroyed or call for their squad to retreat when the opposition is too strong for them. However, they are not running scared, but either going to get reinforcements (the Hunter or two watching from a distance are observing and analyzing the size, strength, weaknesses, tactics and capabilities of their squad's opponent) or to lure their enemy into following them into an ambush or other type of trap. Those adventurers familiar with Xiticix ways will know that the next engagement with Xiticix forces will not underestimate them, and either match them bug for man or more likely outnumber them two or three to one. Hunters are more likely to participate in combat when the odds are in their favor.

Average Level of Experience: 4-6th level on average, with 20% 1-3 level, and 20% attaining 7-10th level. Less than 7% live long enough to attain greater levels of experience.

Natural Abilities: The standard abilities common to all Xiticix. Don't forget the Hunter's additional bonuses per level of experience in regard to many hunting/tracking and sensory abilities described in the beginning of this section and below.

1. **Special Bonus:** +1 attack per melee round at levels 3, 7, 11 and 15.

2. **Special Bonus:** +1 to save vs Horror Factor at levels 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14.

3. **Types of Chemical Excretions:** Colony Identification, Call to Arms, Chemical Alarm, Death Scent, Trail Scent and Spit Acid.

4. **"Mark" Target Chemical (special):** As described previously, the ability to "mark" a P.P.E. target for capture is exclusive to the Hunter. This chemical spray can also be used to "mark" characters and targets (house, vehicle, robot, etc.) for revenge and strategic assaults and targeting (i.e. "you eight attack the target I have marked," or "the one who is marked must be the first to fall," or "the thing that is marked is the item that must be destroyed," and so on).

Range: 40 feet (12.2 m).

Damage: None from the chemical itself.

Duration: The "mark" lasts for 1D4+12 days before it wears off.

Payload: Can be used twice per melee round, but each use counts as one melee attack/action.

5. **Natural Camouflage Ability (special):** Much like a chameleon, the Hunter can shift its colors and the patterns on its body to blend in with its surroundings. The process of changing takes one melee round, but when complete it gives the Hunter a bonus of +20% to prowl and a 98% ability to hide among vegetation when standing still. -10% when the environment is not woodlands or the hive setting (outside or underground) and reduce to 75% when moving slowly (at one quarter speed). Moving at up to half speed reduces being seen to 55%, appearing as a blur of movement and color among the matching colors and shades of the background. At full movement rate, the percentage is a minuscule 20%. **Note:** The ability to camouflage and move

about unseen in open terrain and in alien and "unnatural" modern city environments is done at -20%.

These camouflage percentages also apply when the Hunter is flying, provided he has taken the time to camouflage himself by trying to match the general background color of the sky. However, the best possible percentage to remain unseen while flying is 75%, even when hovering in one place.

Special Combat Moves: Same as the Warrior.

Psionics: Considered a Minor Psychic with the powers of Presense Sense, See the Invisible, Sense Evil, Sense Magic, Sense Time, and Mind Block.

I.S.P.: M.E.x2 +1D6 per level of experience.

R.C.C. Skills (equivalent to instincts): Wilderness Survival (+30%), Land Navigation (+30%), Aerial Navigation (+30%), Basic Math (+30%), Detect Ambush (+20%), Detect Concealment (+15%), Camouflage (+20%), Intelligence (+20%), Prowl (+10%), W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Sword, W.P. Spear, W.P. Chain, W.P. Energy Weapon (i.e. Xiticix TK weapons) and two W.P. Ancient of choice, excluding Archery. They enjoy fighting, but prefer to track, stalk, spy and plot.

Attacks Per Melee Round: Five attacks per melee round.

Bonuses (in addition to possible Attribute & Natural Ability Bonuses): +3 on initiative, +2 to strike, +4 to parry, +2 to dodge, +2 to disarm, +6 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, can perform kick attacks, and gets an additional +2 to save vs poison and disease.

Weapon Notes: The spear, ball and chain, sickle axe, and sickle sword are among the Hunter's favorites. They also like the Resin Spitter Rifle and TK-Rifle.

Hand to Hand Combat: The supernatural P.S. of the Hunter means that punches do Mega-Damage. Damages below are representative of an average Hunter's strength, and may increase for those that are extraordinarily strong (26 P.S. or higher. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for actual damages). The extra arms of the Hunter end in large sickle-like pincers that can be used in melee combat to slash and stab opponents.

Critical strike on an 19-20.

Restrained Punch: 4D6 S.D.C.

Normal Punch: 2D6 M.D.

Power Punch: 4D6 M.D. (counts as two attacks).

Bite Attack: 3D6 M.D. plus poison damage.

Double Pincer Strike: 1D4x10; mouth and pincers strike.

Ramming or Head-Butting: 1D4 M.D.

P.P.E.: 2D4x10+10

Xiticix Leaper

The recent discovery of the Xiticix Leaper has led some scholars and CS scientists to wonder if this particular species is a mutant, and if so, does the mutation originate on the Xiticix homeworld, or is it the result of magic energies from Rifts Earth? Unlike most other Xiticix, the Leaper has only two pairs of arms that end in clawed fingers. The oversized legs are thick and powerful and designed for leaping great heights and distances. They are not designed to swing forward like human legs, so they can not kick in a forward direction. However, they can strike like a freight train when kicking at targets behind them. The wings are semi-transparent (those of most Xiticix are transparent like the wings of a fly), smaller, and differently shaped than most Xiticix, resembling those of Earth moths more than a fly. This means

Leapers fly more slowly than most Xiticix and have a lower dodge bonus when airborne.

The head of the Leaper is the most bizarre and extremely different from other Xiticix. Orion Greenfeld described it as a “demon’s head made of wax an’ melted.” Indeed, everything about it is contrary to all the other Xiticix. The Leaper has two large, round eyes, but they are recessed under a heavy, armored eyebrow ridge. This gives the monsters a rather demonic, skeletal appearance as the two large eyes look like sunken, empty eye sockets. A third, small eye is located in the middle of the forehead, with two other small eyes located above the ridge at either end of it and an additional one on each side of the head. All small eyes are hidden by the spines and jagged carapace making them barely discernable. Running down the center of the skull is a row of 3-5 jagged spines. These spines provide extra protection to the head, effectively parrying and blocking strikes leveled at it (the spines take the brunt of impacts), but are also used to stab and impale with head butts and head-down leaping and ramming attacks. On the sides of the head are a pair of long, narrow fins that resemble the upside-down scabbard of a short sword. These provide additional protection to the head and eyes from energy blasts and blows to the head. Strangely enough, the antennae are the pair of long spines that seem to be growing out of the shoulder area.

The mouth is also very different from the norm. The Leaper’s mandibles are not as insect or scissor-like, but more closely resemble the pincers of a spider, ending in wicked, poisonous hooks. The lower jaw also has a hook-like plate enabling the Leaper to bite from the sides and bottom. This biting jaw arrangement is especially effective against Mega-Damage beings, which are also vulnerable to their poison. In fact, some Psi-Stalkers extract the poison sacks from slain Leapers and use them on their blades (the poison is described in detail under *Natural Abilities*).

Leapers love combat and enjoy setting ambushes, surprise attacks, and engaging in torture and absolute carnage! They prefer to hunt, stalk, extract bloody retribution, act as assassins and serve Hunters as their bodyguards and loyal soldiers who kill on command. They love to strike from behind, above or other unexpected ways to get the drop on their surprised opponents. They also love to antagonize an enemy and get him/her/them to chase them, usually leading their adversaries into an ambush, trap or trouble. Despite this, they are not considered true “warriors” but second class, auxiliary combat troops and specialists who engage in acts of assassination, retribution and general assistance. They are frequently used by Hunters like loaded guns, point and fire — meaning, the Leapers are told what to do, who to kill or capture, and immediately run off to do it. They follow and obey the Hunters (and Super-Warriors), anxiously waiting to be called forth; a target is identified and the Leapers set loose against it, ideally to destroy it. They are like obedient mad dogs loyal to the Hunters and the Hive Colony. While Leapers prefer the leadership of Hunters, they also obey the chain of command that is the Xiticix hierarchy and respect Queens, Super-Warriors, Warriors and Hunters above all others.

The Queens and other Xiticix tend to regard the Leaper as a Jack-of-all-trades suitable for combat and labor. As such, they may be made to help the Nannies care for the young and work as part of the labor force, as well as assignments involving reconnaissance, intelligence, tracking and combat.

Xiticix Leaper/Assassin R.C.C.

Also Known as the Hawk-mouth Xiticix.

Alignment: Most humanoids consider them Diabolic evil, but in truth these obsessively self-serving soldiers are Anarchist. And when it comes to the Hive Colony, they are completely loyal and selfless.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+6 and is considered to be in the same category as a supernatural predator, functioning on instinct as much as intellect; M.E. 1D6+10, M.A. 1D6+2, P.S. 2D6+16, P.P. 2D6+14, P.E. 1D6+14, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 2D6+30 (approx. 25 mph/40 km), or 3D6+70 (approx. 50-60 mph/80 to 96 km) when they have room to travel by quickly leaping or running in long, leaping strides.

Flying speed is 1D6x10+60, with an average flight speed factor of 90 (approx. 60 mph/96 km).

All physical attributes are considered supernatural, including P.S.; see the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for complete details regarding Supernatural P.S. and damage.

Size: 6 feet (1.8 m) in their normal bent leg, crouched and ready to leap position (as depicted in the illustration), but 10-11 feet (3 to 3.3 m) tall standing completely erect.

Weight: 400 lbs (180 kg).

M.D.C. by Location (Adult):

Main Body: 1D4x10+33 +P.E. number. Mature adults get an additional 1D6 M.D.C. per level of experience.

Eyes: Large (2) — 15 each

Eyes: Small (5) — 10 each

Antennae (2) — 25 each

Arms (4) — 50 each

Legs (2) — 100 each

Wings (2) — 50 each

M.D.C. Resin Augmentation: Can increase M.D.C. of Main Body by up to 40%.

M.D.C. (Young): 4D6+12 for main body and all other appendages are roughly half those of the adult. Young do not use resin augmentation.

Damage Capacity for Non-M.D.C. Worlds: Young: P.E.x2 to determine Hit Points and 3D6+10 for S.D.C. Double for full grown adults +P.E. attribute number and 1D6 to Hit Points per level of experience. Antennae have 15 S.D.C. each, arms and wings 35 each, and legs 50. Armor Rating (A.R.): Young: 9, Mature Adult: 12.

Horror Factor: 11, or 15 for a squad of 10 or more.

Disposition: Anxious, fidgety and aggressive. They seem like they are ready to spring into action to fight and kill at a moment’s notice. They are soldiers in the true sense of the word in that they prefer to be directed and given orders, rather than think for themselves.

Average Level of Experience: Typically 3-6th level, with 25% 1st to 2nd level and only 10% living long enough to attain levels higher than 7-13. Few Leapers live to attain any level higher than 13.

Natural Abilities: The standard abilities common to all Xiticix, plus enhanced healing. Check for possible bonuses per level of experience in regard to the many natural abilities described in the beginning of this section (antennae, eyes, etc.).

1. Special Bonus: +1 attack per melee round at levels 2, 5, 9 and 15.

2. Special Bonus: +1 to save vs Horror Factor at levels 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14.



3. Types of Chemical Excretions: Colony Identification, Chemical Alarm and poison (special).

4. Poisonous Bite (special): The hawk-like mouth and pincers exude a deadly poison that stops most S.D.C. creatures in their tracks, and inflicts M.D. to Mega-Damage beings. The secretion of the poison in the mouth and pincers occurs simultaneously, but counts as one melee action/attack. Thus, each poisonous bite counts as two melee attacks.

Bite Damage (without poison): 5D6 S.D.C. if the Leaper is trying to torture or toy with human or other S.D.C. prey or 3D6 M.D. against Mega-Damage opponents and M.D.C. armor. The Leaper can choose to bite with or without releasing the poison. A normal dose of Leaper poison will kill most humans and D-Bees in half a melee round (approx. 7 seconds)!

- 1D4x100 S.D.C./Hit Points to humans and other mortal, S.D.C. beings. A successful save vs lethal poison (14 or higher) means the character suffers only 10% damage (1D4x10 subtracted first from S.D.C. and then Hit Points). However, the lucky individual will feel like his body is on fire and suffers the following penalties for 1D4+2 melee rounds: Reduce initiative bonus by half, -1 attack per melee round, combat bonuses are reduced by half and skills are performed at -30%!

Any character who fails to save vs lethal poison suffers the full 1D4x100 damage and the same penalties above for 1D6+6 melee rounds. Multiple bites mean accumulative damage and the duration of penalties is extended 1D4 melee rounds, but the penalties themselves do not increase (remain the same as listed above).

- Against Mega-Damage Creatures, the poison does 4D6 M.D. +1D6 M.D. additional damage at the beginning of each new melee round for 1D6 melees. *Mega-Damage creatures* include, rival Xiticix, dragons, Faerie Folk, demons and most supernatural beings! Don't forget to also include the 3D6 M.D. from the bite itself.
- Use of the Poison by Others: Psi-Stalkers, Indian Warriors, the Trapper-Hunter O.C.C. and select D-Bees (excluding the Noli-Bushmen, Groot and Simvan) have learned to handle this poison and use it on arrows, spears and blades.

Damage: The comparatively small amount of poison does only 6D6 S.D.C. damage or 1D4 M.D. damage, but definitely gives S.D.C. weapons and light M.D. weapons an added boost.

Limitations: The poison is only effective against opponents who have exposed skin, because the weapon must cut flesh to inflict damage. On arrows and spears the dose of poison is only good for one hit, but on swords, axes and other large blade weapons, the poison can inflict damage from two cutting attacks before it is sufficiently wiped clean of the blade.

5. Leaping Ability (special): Can leap 20 feet (6 m) high and 40 feet (12 m) across from a standing still position; double the height and length when done with a running start. In fact, the Leaper typically travels by a sustained succession of leaps, like an Earth grasshopper. Each leap counts as one melee action.

Power Leap: This is a running leap in which the Xiticix throws everything he has into the final leap, enabling him to hurl up to 60 feet (19.3 m) high and 120 feet (36 m) across. Xiticix Leapers are very quick and accurate in their leaps and can gauge the height and/or length of their leap very precisely, within 2D6 inches (under 0.3 m).

Special Combat Moves: Leapers do *NOT* have the same combat moves as the Warrior because their bodies are very different. However, they have a few moves of their own that are unique to their species.

1. Rear Power Kick (special): 1D4x10 M.D.; with a range of about seven feet (2.1 m), that's how long the leg can reach. Counts as one melee attack.

2. Leap Kick (special): 1D6x10+12 M.D.

Range: Up to 20 feet (6 m) from a standing still position.

Up to 40 feet (12.2 m) with a short running start.

Counts as two melee attacks/actions.

3. Parry with Foot & Leg (special): Like a martial artist, the Leaper can parry with his long legs and feet!

Also see *Hand to Hand Combat* below.

4. Strike with Feet (special): When hovering airborne at least five feet (1.5 m) off the ground, the Leaper can use his feet to strike and parry, providing one additional attack per melee round. A strike/claw attack with the feet (basically a punch or clawing attack) does 2D6 M.D. +Supernatural P.S. punch damage (typically 2D6). The character can also use the Rear Power Kick.

Psionic Abilities: Considered a Minor Psychic with the powers of See the Invisible, Sense Magic, Impervious to Cold, and Impervious to Fire.

I.S.P.: M.E. attribute number +1D6 per level of experience.

R.C.C. Skills (equivalent to instincts): Wilderness Survival (+25%), Land Navigation (+20%), Aerial Navigation (+10%), Basic Math (+20%), Camouflage (+10%), Intelligence (+10%), Surveillance ("tailing" only at +20%), Prowl (+10%), Escape Artist (+10%), Swim (+15%), W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Sword, W.P. Spear, W.P. Energy Weapon (i.e. Xiticix TK weapons) and two W.P. Ancient of choice, excluding archery.

Attacks Per Melee Round: Four attacks per melee round.

Bonuses (in addition to possible Attribute & Natural Ability Bonuses): +4 on initiative, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +5 to dodge, +2 to disarm, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, can perform kick attacks, and gets an additional +2 to save vs poison and disease.

Weapon Notes: Most Leapers prefer to use melee weapons rather than long-range weapons, with the Double-Dagger, Sickle Axe, Beheading Axe and long-sword being among their favorites. They also like the TK-Rifle and Shooting Shoulder Spikes.

Hand to Hand Combat: The supernatural P.S. of the Leaper means that punches do Mega-Damage. Damages below are representative of an average Leaper's strength, and may increase for those that are extraordinarily strong (26 P.S. or higher. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for actual damages).

Critical strike on an 18-20.

Restrained Punch: 4D6 S.D.C.

Normal Punch: 2D6 M.D.

Power Punch: 4D6 M.D. (counts as two attacks).

Bite Attack: 3D6 M.D. plus poison damage.

Bite Damage (Non-Poisonous): 3D6 M.D. or 5D6 S.D.C.

Ramming or Head-Butting: 4D6 M.D.

Rear Power Kick: 1D4x10; counts as two melee actions.

Leap Kick: 1D6x10+12; counts as two melee actions.

Clawing Strike with Foot: 2D6 M.D. +normal P.S. punch damage.

P.P.E.: 1D4x10+20

Xiticix Nannies

"I tell ya it was feedin' dem lil' nits wit dis sludge-lookin' stuff! Like sum . . . nanny or nurse . . . or sumptin. No lyin'. An' der was a whole gaggle of 'em."

— *Excerpt from the CS debriefings of Orion Greenfeld*

Xiticix Nannies are hulking, hunchbacked, grey creatures with bright yellow markings and long arms. Their mouths and mandibles are larger than other Xiticix and they sport a third antenna on the top of their heads. Consequently, the Nanny's head more closely resembles that of the Queen than other Xiticix. Also like the Queen, these insects have a number of roughly oval shaped organs on their abdomens that glow when they process P.P.E. into sludge. With the exception of the Queens and Digger, they are also the largest of the Xiticix, reaching 12 feet (3.6 m) in height and a little more than a thousand pounds (455 kg) in weight.

The most striking feature about the Nanny is that she is the only member of the Xiticix species to lack wings and flight capabilities. Moreover, all Nannies are female, not that humans could tell.

The Nanny is hunched over with her head in her chest, and is often seen crouched or on all sixes to feed and care for the eggs, nits, and grubs under her charge. Nannies move with deliberate care and slowness as they go about their duties of feeding and tending the nits and grubs, but they can move quite quickly when they have to. Their size and bulk makes them powerful, and they will fight to the death to defend the babies.

Nannies spend nearly their entire lives in the Egg Chambers and Nurseries tending to and protecting the unhatched eggs and developing Xiticix larvae known as nits and grubs. Nannies can leave these Chambers to move about the hive to attend a Queen when she is giving birth, to join a battle or just to take a walk. However, all Nannies live in the Egg Chambers, Nurseries, and Queens' Chambers and usually stay close by, even when off to do something else. Furthermore, they are not expected to participate in any labor or activity other than the care of the eggs and babies — that is their sole responsibility. To this end, Nannies are authority figures who can marshal and command Workers, Diggers and even the fighter classes of Xiticix to run errands, help care for the nits and grubs and to defend them at all cost. That having been said, except during emergencies and invasions, the Nanny rarely bothers Diggers, Leapers, Warriors or Hunters, relying on her fellow Nannies and a host of obedient Workers who typically outnumber Nannies in the Nurseries three or four to one. **Note:** Only the authority of the *Super-Warrior*, *Young Queens*, and *Elder Queen* supersedes the Nanny, all of whom she obeys without question.

If any creature should threaten their charges, the Nannies unleash the chemical "Call to Arms," which will bring Warriors running to them within 1D6 melee rounds. Until the Warriors arrive, the Nannies will direct the Workers to set up a line of defense and attack any invaders and address any threats, while they gather as many young in their arms as possible and prepare to remove them from harm's way. Meanwhile, the Nannies will attack and fight to the bitter end any invader who gets past the defenders and makes a threatening move toward them or the babies. When help arrives (i.e. Warriors, Leapers or Hunters), the



Nannies continue to surround, gather and protect the babies with their own bodies and/or attempt to evacuate them to a safer place. As previously mentioned, Nannies can be quite fast and their size makes them powerful adversaries in combat. In addition to raw physical attacks, the Nannies can also spit a powerful acid and can secrete S.D.C. poison from their mandibles.

One of the abilities that make them truly integral to the growth and prosperity of the hive Colony is their ability to make "Sludge," the pasty goo that accelerates the babies' growth into adults in a year and a half. Only Nannies (of which there are many) and the Queens (of which there are few), can create this strange magic-based nutrient. The manufacturing of "Sludge" is critical during the early stages of a Hive Colony's growth and survival.

Nanny R.C.C.

Alignment: Considered Anarchist by humans, but they are selfless and dedicated to the Hive Colony. They live to serve the hive and will not hesitate to sacrifice their lives to protect the baby Xitix in their care.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+12 and is considered to be in the same category as a supernatural predator, functioning on instinct as much as intellect. M.E. 2D6+12, M.A. 1D6+6, P.S. 2D6+20, P.P. 1D6+10, P.E. 2D6+10, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 3D6+12 running; Nannies cannot fly. All physical attributes are considered supernatural, including P.S. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for details, as well as the general damages listed below under combat.

Gender: Female. Only Nannies and Queens are female.

Size: 12 feet (3.6 m).

Weight: 900-1,200 lbs (405 to 540 kg).

M.D.C. by Location (Adult):

Main Body: 1D6x10+80 +P.E. number. Mature adults get an additional 2D6 M.D.C. per level of experience.

Eyes: Large (2) — 15 each

Eyes: Small (5) — 10 each

Antennae (3) — 20 each

Arms (4) — 60 each

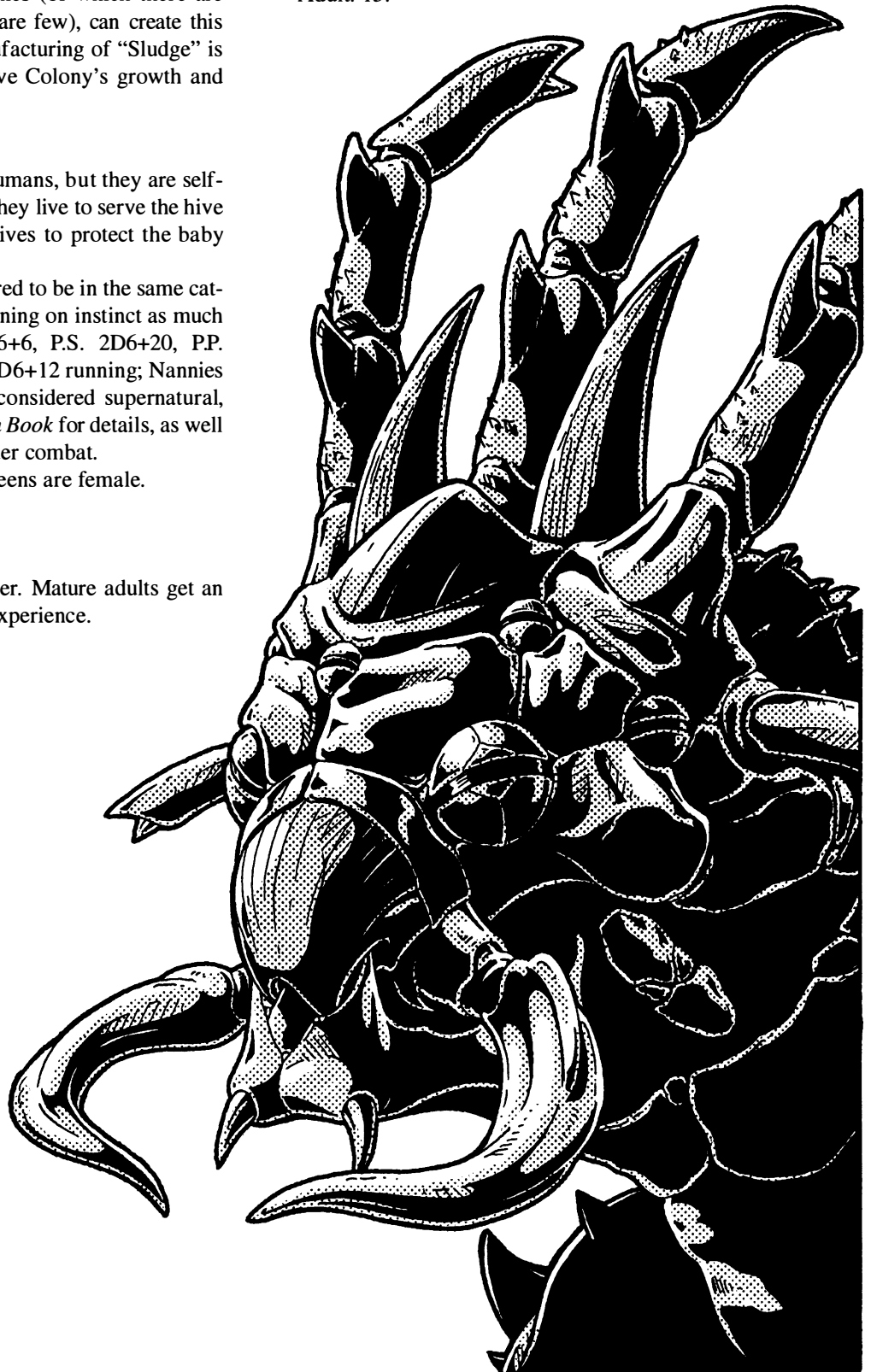
Legs (2) — 70 each

No Wings

M.D.C. Resin Augmentation: Nannies never use resin augmentation.

M.D.C. (Young): 1D4x10+40 for main body and all other appendages are roughly half those of the adult.

Damage Capacity for Non-M.D.C. Worlds: Young: 1D4x10 to determine Hit Points and 4D6+6 for S.D.C. Double for full grown adults +P.E. attribute number and 2D6 to Hit Points per level of experience. Antennae have 20 S.D.C. each, arms 45 each, and legs 60. Armor Rating (A.R.): Young: 12, Mature Adult: 15.



Horror Factor: 10, or 12 for a group of 10 or more.

Disposition: Protective, dedicated and motherly toward baby Xiticix and the Queens, but aggressive and dangerous to those who threaten the young.

Average Level of Experience: 4-7th level on average, with 20% 1-3 level, and 25% attaining 8th level or higher.

Natural Abilities: The standard abilities common to all Xiticix, plus the following.

1. **Make Sludge (special):** Sludge is a special “baby formula” fed to nits and grubs to accelerate their growth. It is essentially concentrated nutrients and P.P.E. made from living humanoid victims who are eaten, regurgitated and stored in a pasty goo. For complete details, see #6 under *Chemical Descriptions* of the Power section earlier in this book.

2. **Types of Chemical Excretions:** Colony Identification, Chemical Alarm, Trail Scent, Spit Acid, and poison (described below).

3. **S.D.C. Poison (special):** The Nanny and Warrior can bite using their mandibles with the intention of poisoning their opponent, as well as inflicting 4D6 S.D.C./Hit Point from the nipping bite itself (a nonpoisonous bite does 2D6 M.D.). The poison causes immediate nausea, vomiting and convulsions unless a successful save versus lethal poison is made.

Poison damage is 6D6 S.D.C./Hit Points per each bite, plus the victim suffers the following penalties: attacks per melee round and combat bonuses reduced by half for one melee round (15 seconds). However, the wave of pain, nausea and penalties pass quickly (15 seconds).

A successful save vs lethal poison (14 or higher) means the character takes only 1D4 S.D.C. damage from the poison, plus the 4D6 S.D.C. bite damage, but does not suffer from any nausea or penalties.

This poison is not anywhere near as powerful as the venom of the Leaper and has absolutely no effect on Mega-Damage creatures or other Xiticix. When fighting humanoids, Xiticix Warriors often secrete the poison to coat their weapons with the toxin, but Nannies rarely consider this option.

Special Combat Moves: None.

Psionics: Considered a Major Psychic with the powers of Healing Touch, Psychic Surgery, Replenish P.P.E., Suppress Fear, Empathy, Telepathy, See the Invisible, Sense Magic, Sense Time, and Mind Block. Needs a 12 or higher to save vs psionic attacks. Xiticix who possess telepathy do not use the power to communicate with non-Xiticix life forms, but may use it to communicate with other Xiticix. In the case of the Nanny, telepathy is used constantly between the Nannies as well as the Workers assigned to assist them. Telepathy is often used to communicate with the Queens as well. Both empathy and telepathy are used to communicate with and better understand the needs of the babies.

I.S.P.: M.E.x3 +1D6+1 per level of experience.

R.C.C. Skills (equivalent to instincts): Wilderness Survival (+10%), Land Navigation (+20%), Basic Math (+30%), Sing (+10%), Camouflage (+15%; to hide babies and eggs), W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Blunt, and W.P. Energy Weapon (i.e. Xiticix TK weapons). They are dedicated nurses and caretakers of baby Xiticix.

Attacks Per Melee Round: Four attacks per melee round.

Bonuses (in addition to attribute bonuses): +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry and dodge, +4 to roll with impact, +3 to save

vs Horror Factor. All bonuses are doubled when the Nanny is protecting baby Xiticix!

Weapon Notes: Most Nannies don't consider using weapons and attack with mandibles and claws, sometimes grabbing a weapon or object to use as a club on the spur of the moment.

Hand to Hand Combat: The supernatural P.S. of the Nanny means that punches do Mega-Damage. Damages below are representative of an average Nanny's strength, and may increase for those that are extraordinarily strong (26 P.S. or higher. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for actual damages).

Critical strike on a natural 20.

Restrained punch: 4D6 S.D.C.

Normal punch: 2D6 M.D.

Power Punch: 4D6 M.D. (counts as two attacks).

Bite attack: 3D6 M.D. plus poison.

P.P.E.: 2D6x10+30

The Xiticix Queens

“I hear tell from many o’ my Psi-Stalker compadres dat dere is a bunch of Queens. You know, like a mama and her daughters. I believe ‘em ‘cause dere good people an’ wouldn’t be lyin’ ta me, no siree. But I ain’t seen ‘em. All we saw was dat dere big un. An’ I got no doubt dat she was the Queen Mother.”

— Excerpt from the CS debriefings of Orion Greenfield

Young Queens

The Queen is the largest of the Xiticix, towering 20 feet (6 m) in height, plus 3-5 feet (0.9 to 1.5 m) of antennae that resembles a crown. Even the young Queens weigh a ton or more and at the very least, are frighteningly impressive and intimidating. The young Queen's chitin armor is dark grey with black, green and light grey highlights and accents. The head is crowned with three long, segmented antennae and the body ends with a large abdomen dotted with oval organs that glow with eerie green luminescence. The abdomen is the “egg sac” and life's blood of the colony. Only Queens lay the eggs from which *all* Xiticix are born. Without at least one Queen, survival of the species is not possible (there is usually a minimum of one Elder Queen and two young, and as many as one hundred in new colonies like the six on Rifts Earth). It is the Queen who lays all of the eggs and only she can “tell” those eggs what they should grow up to be. The egg sac of a young Queen is usually 12-16 feet (3.6 to 4.9 m) long, 4-6 feet (1.2 to 1.8 m) in diameter, and contains 40-70 eggs (1D4x10+30) at any given time.

Everything in the hive is controlled and directed by the Queens, with the Elder Queen functioning as Supreme Commander-in-Chief and the young Queens as her trusted Generals. Her commands are sent via verbal, telepathic and chemical messages. The chemical secretions are subtle smells and activators that not only show emotion and carry warnings, but also trigger genetic changes in the eggs, nits and grubs. This latter ability enables the Queens to adjust the population to best suit the needs of the colony. For example, if there are too many Warriors or Diggers, the Queen(s) can release chemicals that will

cause the eggs or baby Xiticix to develop into fewer Warriors or Diggers and into more of whatever Xiticix species is most needed. They can even cause new young Queens to appear as needed. Absolute population control.

Xiticix are not only insect-like in appearance, but also in their social structure. The gathering of these creatures within a localized area, the “Hive Network,” is organized and functions very much like a termite, ant or bee hive. The Queen(s) directs and everyone else goes about the duty they are instinctively programmed to do. Workers labor, Warriors fight and protect, Diggers make tunnels and build, and so on. All go about their appointed tasks until ordered to do otherwise. They do not seem to have much, if any, independent thought or desires, and all work for the greater good of the hive community. Since the Queens are an absolute necessity for the survival of the colony, all Xiticix serve the Queens and fight to the death to protect them.

Both the Elder and young Queens spend their lifetimes laying eggs and producing the chemicals necessary for the hive to grow and prosper. Young Queens are always protected by an elite guard of 1D6+6 Warriors, 1D4+2 Hunters, 1D4 Leapers and one Super-Warrior (the Elder Queen has twice this number). In addition, each is attended by 1D6+6 Workers and 1D4 Nannies who attend to all the Queen’s other needs. These elite guards and attendants NEVER leave her side for any reason. Furthermore, if a Queen is threatened she and her defenders can call for additional help via telepathy and chemical alarms. Nearby Nannies and/or the Workers under their command will arrive to help within one melee round (15 seconds)! One Super-Warrior, 3D6 Warriors and 1D6 Hunters and/or Leapers will appear within two melee rounds (30 seconds) with 1D4x10 more “fighting class” Xiticix — 60% Warriors — (or Workers if fighters are not available) arrive approximately every minute (four melee rounds) until the enemy is defeated, the danger is over, and the warning called off. Likewise, Workers and other Xiticix will come to the young, and particularly, the Elder Queen’s aid especially when the hive is under a major assault. In fact, the moment she is threatened, a series of chemical alarms will be set off by the Queen and her defenders, setting the entire hive on combat alert.

All of this protection is rarely used, however, for the Queens’ Chambers are hidden deep within the subterranean tunnels, far from the elevated entrances to the Hive Network. Invaders would have to fight through thousands (if not millions) of defenders to make their way to a Queen’s Chamber. The only alternative is to use some spectacular (typically magical) means to locate the chamber and attack the Queen without travelling through the maze of tunnels and defending hordes.

Despite the fact that the Queens are waited on hand and foot, and surrounded by protectors, they are far from helpless. A young Queen is one the largest, strongest and most powerful of the Xiticix. She is as ruthless and deadly in combat as any Warrior and her arsenal includes a large number of psionic powers.

Xiticix Young Queen R.C.C.

Alignment: Most humanoids consider the Queens to be Aberrant or Diabolic evil, but in truth they live to selflessly serve the hive and make certain their species continues.

Gender: Female. Only Queens and Nannies are female.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+16 and is considered to be in the same category as a supernatural predator, functioning on instinct as much

as intellect; M.E. 2D6+16, M.A. 1D6+6, P.S. 2D6+26, P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 1D6+16, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 3D6+16 running or 1D6x10+60, with an average speed of 90 (approx. 60 mph/96 km) flying. This speed can be attained even when carrying the egg sac.

All physical attributes are considered supernatural, including P.S. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for details as well as the general damages listed below under combat.

Size: 20 feet (6.1 m) tall plus 3-5 feet (0.9 to 1.5 m) for the antennae. The egg sac of a young Queen is usually 12-16 feet (3.6 to 4.9 m) long, 4-6 feet (1.2 to 1.8 m) in diameter, and contains 40-70 eggs (1D4x10+30) at any given time.

Weight: 1-2 tons.

M.D.C. by Location (Adult):

Main Body: 1D4x100 +P.E. number. Mature adults get an additional 4D6 M.D.C. per level of experience.

Eyes: Large (2) — 20 each

Eyes: Small (5) — 15 each

Antennae (3) — 25 each

Arms (4) — 60 each

Legs (2) — 80 each

Wings (2) — 80 each

M.D.C. Resin Augmentation: Can increase M.D.C. of Main Body by up to 30%, but rarely do so.

M.D.C. (Young): 1D6x10+40 for main body and all other appendages are roughly half those of the adult. Young do not use resin augmentation.

Damage Capacity for Non-M.D.C. Worlds: Young: 1D6x10+60 to determine Hit Points and 2D6x10 for S.D.C. Double for full grown adults +P.E. attribute number and 4D6 to Hit Points per level of experience. Antennae have 30 S.D.C. each, arms 65 each, and legs 90. Armor Rating (A.R.): Young: 13, Mature Adult: 16. **Horror Factor:** 14

Disposition: Cool, calm, calculating, confident, bold and aggressive. She’s the Queen and expects those beneath her to obey her commands immediately and without question.

Average Level of Experience: 5-8th level on average, with 15% 1-4th level, and 20% attaining 9th level or higher.

Natural Abilities: The standard abilities common to all Xiticix, plus the following.

1. **Make Sludge (special):** Only the Queens and Nannies can make this special “baby formula.” For complete details, see #6 under *Chemical Descriptions* of the Power section earlier in this book.

2. **Types of Chemical Excretions:** All, including make resin (only the Queens and Diggers can make resin), and uses Spit Acid as one of her defenses.

3. **Make TW Weapons (special):** Only the Queens, with the help of the Diggers, psionically (and magically?) make the long-range weapons, including the TK rifle, TK pistol, Spike Shooters and the Resin Spitter rifle. Nobody knows how this process works but assumes it involves psionics and perhaps the syphoning of magic energy. In many regards, these are crude Techno-Wizard weapons. No human or D-Bee has ever witnessed the creation process. Presumably, only the Queens can (magically or psionically?) create the firing mechanism and P.P.E. power source while the Diggers make the physical weapon.

4. **Special Combat Bonus:** +1 attack per melee round at levels 4, 9 and 15.



5. Increased Healing Factor (special): Regenerates 1D4x10 M.D.C. per 24 hours.

Special Combat Moves: None, but also see psionics.

Psionic Abilities: Considered a Major Psychic with the powers of Telepathy, Empathy, Empathic Transmission, Sixth Sense, See the Invisible, Sense Magic, Impervious to Poison, Impervious to Cold and Fire, Levitation, Mind Block, Group Mind Block, Psi-Sword, Psi-Shield and Super Telekinesis. Needs a 10 or higher to save vs psionic attack.

I.S.P.: M.E.x3 +10 per level of experience.

R.C.C. Skills (equivalent to instincts): Wilderness Survival (+25%), Land Navigation (+25%), Aerial Navigation (+20%), Basic Math (+40%), W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Energy Weapon (i.e. Xiticix TK weapons) and two W.P. Ancient of choice, excluding Archery. Tends to rely on cunning, psionics and brute strength.

Attacks Per Melee Round: Four attacks per melee round.

Bonuses (in addition to possible Attribute & Natural Ability Bonuses): +1 on initiative, +1 to strike, +2 to parry, +1 to dodge, +4 to pull punch, +3 to roll with impact, and additional +2 to save vs poison and disease, +5 to save vs Horror Factor, and +5 to save vs possession and mind control.

Weapon Notes: Most Queens will use whatever weapons are handy, but tend to rely on their cunning, psionic powers and brute strength. **Hand to Hand Combat:** The supernatural P.S. of the young Queen means that punches do Mega-Damage. Damages below are representative of an average Queen's strength, and may increase for those that are extraordinarily strong (31 P.S. or higher). See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for actual damages.

Critical strike on an 19-20.

Restrained Punch: 5D6 S.D.C.

Normal Punch: 4D6 M.D.

Normal Kick: 5D6 M.D.

Power Punch: 1D4x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks).

Bite attack: 5D6 M.D.

Elite Guards: 1D6+6 Warriors, 1D4+2 Hunters, 1D4 Leapers and one Super-Warrior.

Attendants: 1D6+6 Workers and 1D4 Nannies who attend to all the Queen's other needs.

P.P.E.: 4D6x10

Note: Also see the Elder Queen.

The Elder Queen

The Supreme Power

"Ummm . . . frankly, she scared the livin' hell outta me. Thirty feet tall, black as night, mean as sin. All horns an' vengeance. I ... um ... I'm ashamed ta say it, but I jus' lit outta der when I seen her. I weren't alone neither. We all knew we had done bit off more den we could chew when we saw her. Miracle any o' us got outta dere alive."

— Excerpt from the CS debriefing of Orion Greenfeld

The Elder Queen is the ancient matriarch and absolute ruler of the Hive Colony. She is not unlike a brain controlling a body made up of hundreds or thousands of individual Xiticix, with the

young Queens and Super-Warriors as her nerve center. As such, all Xiticix including young Queens, Super-Warriors and Nannies obey her without question or hesitation. If she dies or is slain, there is pandemonium followed by days of communal grieving. This occurs even if there is an immediate heir to fill her shoes.

The Elder Queen is even larger than the typical young Queen, standing 25-30 feet (7.6 to 9 m) tall fully erect and pulling a bloated, egg sac of equal length, and 7-10 feet (2.1 to 3 m) tall and just as wide. In some cases, the segmented antennae that crown her head bend and droop with age, but in most cases rise into the air like massive, curved ebony horns 5-7 feet (1.5 to 2.1 m) long. The exoskeleton of the Elder Queen is darker than the young Queens, often entirely black with only bits of grey and green as accents to her grim visage. The exoskeleton is also thicker, stronger and covered with more small to medium spines and jagged edges than the young Queen.

A pair of translucent wings hang from her back like a jewel encrusted cape that glistens and glitters in the dim light. However, her huge egg-filled body makes flight impossible unless she *tears* her upper body away from the egg sac that is her lower abdomen. Ultimately, tearing herself from the egg sac is lethal. Not from the pain or blood loss, because the Elder Queen could live another 6D6 years without it, but once removed, it can not be regrown or reattached. Without the egg sac, the Queen (Elder or young) can not serve the hive in her full capacity, and will volunteer to be slain and turned into "Sludge."

The egg sac seems to glow or radiate with an eerie, pulsating green light and life of its own. Underneath the semi-opaque M.D.C. skin, scores of eggs, up to one hundred and twenty (1D4x10+80), quiver and squirm with the budding life inside them. The eggs gestate inside her body for three months before they are pushed from her body and into the world. Nannies and their Worker assistants immediately take each egg from the Queen's Chamber to the Birthing Chamber (which is usually near the her Chamber and the Nurseries — each Queen, young and old, usually has a cluster of such places near her). Here, the eggs are cleaned and placed in a safe nook that resembles a hole built into the wall. The "egg" looks like a large, white lump or thick worm-like, "fifty pound sack of potatoes" as Orion Greenfeld has put it. Approximately three months after leaving the Queen's body, the egg hatches to reveal a "nit." Roughly one year later, the nit turns into the more menacing looking "grub," and about a year after that, the grub turns into a young adult Xiticix. **Note:** If the nits and grubs are fed "Sludge," they reach full maturity in a year and a half instead of three to three and a half years.

Xiticix "Elder" Queen R.C.C.

Alignment: Most humanoids consider the Queens to be Aberrant or Diabolic evil, but in truth they live to selflessly serve the hive and make certain their species continues.

Gender: Female. Only Queens and Nannies are female.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+20 and is considered to be in the same category as a supernatural predator, functioning on instinct as much as intellect; M.E. 2D6+18, M.A. 1D6+10, P.S. 2D6+32, P.P. 1D6+16, P.E. 1D6+16, P.B. 1D4, Spd. 3D6+6 running or 1D6x10+60 flying, but only if she has torn away from her egg sac. The Elder Queen's sac is so large and heavy with eggs that flying with it attached is impossible.

All physical attributes are considered supernatural, including P.S. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for details as well as the



general damages listed below under combat.

Size: 25-30 feet (7.6 to 9 m) tall plus 5-7 feet (1.5 to 2.1 m) long for the antennae which often become massive, curved black horns (see cover painting). The egg sac of an Elder Queen is usually 25-30 feet (7.6 to 9 m) long and 7-10 feet (2.1 to 3 m) in diameter and contains 90-120 eggs (1D4x10+80) at any given time.

Weight: 3-5 tons.

M.D.C. by Location (Adult):

Main Body: 1D4x100 +130 and an additional 4D6 M.D.C. per level of experience.

Eyes: Large (2) — 20 each

Eyes: Small (5) — 15 each

Antennae (3) — 50 each

Arms (4) — 90 each

Legs (2) — 110 each

Wings (2) — 90 each

M.D.C. Resin Augmentation: Can increase M.D.C. of Main Body by up to 30%, but rarely does so.

Damage Capacity for Non-M.D.C. Worlds: 5D6x10 +20 per level of experience to determine Hit Points and 3D6x10+60 for S.D.C. Antennae have 40 S.D.C. each, arms 75 each, legs 90, and 100 for wings. Armor Rating (A.R.): 17.

Disposition: Cool, calm, calculating, confident, bold and aggressive. She's the Supreme Queen and expects those beneath her, including young Queens, to obey her commands immediately and without question. **Horror Factor:** 16

Average Level of Experience: 9-15th level on average; never lower than 5th level.

Natural Abilities: The standard abilities common to all Xiticix, plus the following.

1. **Make Sludge (special):** Only the Queens and Nannies can make this special "baby formula." For complete details, see #6 under *Chemical Descriptions* of the Power section earlier in this book.

2. **Types of Chemical Excretions:** All, including the manufacturing of resin (only the Queens and Diggers can make resin), and uses Spit Acid as one of her defenses.

3. **Make TW Weapons (special):** Only the Queens, with the help of the Diggers, psionically (and magically?) make the long-range weapons, including the TK rifle, TK pistol, Spikes Spitters, and Resin Spitter rifle. Nobody knows how this process works but assumes it involves psionics and perhaps the syphoning of magic energy. In many regards, these are crude Techno-Wizard weapons. No human or D-Bee has ever witnessed the creation process. Presumably, only the Queens can (magically or psionically?) create the firing mechanism and P.P.E. power source while the Diggers make the physical weapon.

4. **Special Combat Bonus:** +1 attack per melee round at levels 4, 9 and 15.

5. **Increased Healing Factor (special):** Regenerates 1D4x10 M.D.C. per 24 hours.

Special Combat Moves: None, but also see psionics.

Psionic Abilities: Considered a Master Psychic with the powers of Telepathy, Empathy, Empathic Transmission, Sixth Sense, See the Invisible, Sense Magic, Impervious to Poison, Impervious to Cold and Fire, Levitation, Mind Block, Group Mind Block, Psi-Sword, Psi-Shield and Super Telekinesis. Needs a 10 or higher to save vs psionic attack.

I.S.P.: M.E.x5 +10 per level of experience.

R.C.C. Skills (equivalent to instincts): Wilderness Survival (+25%), Land Navigation (+25%), Aerial Navigation (+20%), Basic Math (+40%), W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Energy Weapon (i.e. Xiticix TK weapons) and two W.P. Ancient of choice, excluding Archery. Tends to rely on cunning, psionics and brute strength.

Attacks Per Melee Round: Four attacks per melee round.

Bonuses (in addition to possible Attribute & Natural Ability Bonuses): +3 on initiative, +2 to strike, +4 to parry, +4 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, and additional +4 to save vs poison and disease, +10 to save vs Horror Factor, and +8 to save vs possession and mind control.

Weapon Notes: Elder Queens tend to rely on their minions to protect them, but in a pinch will use whatever weapons are handy. Tend to rely on their cunning, psionic powers and brute strength.

Hand to Hand Combat: The supernatural P.S. of the Elder Queen means that punches do Mega-Damage. Damages below are representative of an average Queen's strength, and may increase for those that are extraordinarily strong (41 P.S. or higher). See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for actual damages.

Critical strike on an 19-20.

Restrained Punch: 6D6 S.D.C.

Normal Punch: 5D6 M.D.

Normal Kick: 6D6 M.D.

Power Punch: 1D6x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks).

Bite attack: 6D6 M.D.

Elite Guards: 1D6+10 Warriors, 1D4+6 Hunters, 1D4+4 Leapers and two Super-Warriors.

Attendants: 1D6+12 Workers, 1D4+4 Nannies and one Digger who attends to all the Queen's other needs.

P.P.E.: 4D6x10

Xiticix Warrior

"I already told ya dey were everywhere. Swarmin' and shootin' and hackin'. At first dey wern't too many 'round, but once dey got excited, dere was many more of 'em den dem worker ones. In minits dey was crawlin' outta da woodwork. No kid-din'. From da ceiling, da floor, da walls . . . da place was crawl-in' wit dem! Musta been a thousand wit more where dey come from."

— Excerpt from the CS debriefing of Orion Greenfeld

The most notorious and recognized of all Xiticix is the Warrior. There are more Warriors than any other Xiticix species and it is these aggressive soldiers that are most often encountered in the wild. Warriors (along with Hunters and Leapers) live in the hive towers and underground, patrol the tunnels and skies above the Hive Cities, defend the borders and protect the colony from all threats. They are aggressive, quick to action and savage in combat. They are dark and imposing, 7 feet (2.1 m) tall, broad shouldered, well armed and covered with M.D.C. chitinous black exoskeletons. They have large mandibles, fly, and carry TK guns and an array of blades and other weapons; typically one for each hand with one or two spares. Weapons that are not being carried are strapped to the waist or slung over the shoulder with vines, rope and even belts taken for slain enemies. (Belts are the only

thing Warriors and Hunters use that are not manufactured by Xiticix. They, as a race, usually avoid all things not Xiticix). Other weapons are “hooked” on or wedged between the spines and nubs that cover their bodies. Likewise, resin armor and augmentation may be deliberately designed (by Diggers) to hold and carry weapons.

It is the responsibility of the Warriors to patrol and defend the Hive Network, inside the tunnels and outside among the towers and surrounding territory. They are constantly on the lookout for interlopers, invaders and enemies. At the slightest hint of danger or trouble, six to a dozen Xiticix Warriors will take wing to investigate, with scores of others standing by. When a Chemical Alarm, Death or Call to Arms rises into the air, thousands mobilize as the entire Hive Colony readies itself for trouble.

When patrolling the outskirts of their border territory, they are constantly alert for the “Marking” scent of the Hunter and other

chemicals that denote trouble (alarm, death, etc.). Likewise, they may follow the trail of a Hunter or Super-Warrior to a specific enemy target or trouble zone; both of these Xiticix use the Trail Scent to mark targets and leave easy to follow scent trails to indicate where they have travelled to, come from or need to return to. The Xiticix sense of smell is so sensitive that they can even discern between recent and old scent trails. If such a scent is detected, they will pursue it with all haste. It is this task of search and patrol that sends the Warrior away from the Hive City and why most people who get to see a Xiticix without having to engage one in combat, see the famous Warrior (occasionally a Hunter, Leaper or Super-Warrior). However, the patrol of hive territory is not the most important task of the Xiticix Warrior.

The Warriors are also the guardians of the Hive Network. Everywhere one goes in a hive there will be a Warrior or groups of them moving throughout the tunnels. Some have regular posts



at entrances or on the outside of the tower structures, but the majority of them simply spend their days constantly moving about the hive. Complex instincts and chemical trails ensure that all of the hive's tunnels are patrolled and that the defenders do not end up all bunched in a single tower or area. In the event of an attack or combat within the hive, all Xiticix involved give off the danger chemical (Alarm, Call to Arms or Death Scent) which stimulates all Warriors who detect it to take action. The stronger the scents the larger the area of the hive that mobilizes and the greater the number of Warriors, Super-Warriors and other fighters on the move. Once the cause of a disturbance has been identified, the Warriors leap to action to isolate, contain and eliminate it. If more Xiticix Warriors are required, they will be called. Most "threats" are treated with deadly force.

The Xiticix function on instinct and have animal (or perhaps more accurately, an insect) intelligence. However, there are flashes of higher, human-like intelligence, but they are so alien that communications and negotiations are impossible. It is their insect-like level of instinct that encourages them to attack voraciously and nonstop. There is no investigating when something foreign is detected in the hive. A Worker, Digger and even a Hunter might investigate, but Warriors (and Super-Warriors and Leapers) never do. They simply respond. If something is not a Xiticix or of Xiticix manufacture, then it is not part of the hive and must be destroyed. Once destroyed or killed, it is removed, taken out of the hive by a Worker. This is how Xiticix Warriors think and operate. Unless commanded to do otherwise by a Queen, Nanny, Super-Warrior or Hunter, Warriors never deviate from this simple and effective protocol procedure. In combat, Xiticix Warriors fight relentlessly and without hesitation or mercy. Battle continues until either they or their enemies are destroyed. When the hive is under siege, the protection of the Elder Queen, the young Queens, and colony as a whole, followed by complete annihilation of the enemy are the Warrior's top priorities, pretty much in that order. See the Overview Section in the beginning of this book for common strategies, tactics and responses.

Xiticix Warrior R.C.C.

Alignment: Most humanoids consider them Diabolic evil, but in truth these obsessively self-sacrificing soldiers live and die in the service of their race and specific Hive Colony.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+8 and is considered to be in the same category as a supernatural predator, functioning on instinct as much as intellect. M.E. 2D6+12, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 2D6+24, P.P. 2D6+12, P.E. 1D6+12, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 3D6+10 running and 2D4x10+80 flying. The average flying speed is 120 (82 mph/131 km) with a possible maximum speed of 160 (105 mph/168 km).

All physical attributes are considered supernatural, including P.S. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for complete details regarding Supernatural P.S. and damage.

Size: 7 feet (2.1 m).

Weight: 500 lbs (227 kg).

M.D.C. by Location (Adult):

Main Body: 1D6x10+20 +P.E. number. Mature adults get an additional 2D6 M.D.C. per level of experience.

Eyes: Large (2) — 15 each

Eyes: Small (5) — 10 each

Antennae (2) — 20 each

Arms (4) — 45 each

Legs (2) — 65 each

Wings (2) — 60 each

M.D.C. Resin Augmentation: Can increase M.D.C. of Main Body by up to 40%, but is rarely used by Warriors lower than 4th level.

M.D.C. (Young): 5D6+10 for main body and all other appendages are roughly half those of the adult. Young do not use resin augmentation.

Damage Capacity for Non-M.D.C. Worlds: Young: P.E.x2 to determine Hit Points and 1D4x10+6 for S.D.C. Double for full grown adults +P.E. attribute number and 1D6 to Hit Points per level of experience. Antennae have 20 S.D.C. each, arms and wings 40 each, and legs 60. Armor Rating (A.R.): Young: 9, Mature Adult: 12.

Horror Factor: 10, or 13 for a squad of 10 or more.

Disposition: Aggressive, combative and downright violent when they need to be. Always active and easily agitated when not in combat.

Average Level of Experience: 1-5th level on average, only 33% will ever reach 6-8th level and less than 10% survive long enough to attain levels 9-15.

Natural Abilities: The standard abilities common to all Xiticix. Don't forget the Warrior's additional bonuses per level of experience in regard to many hunting/tracking and sensory abilities described in the beginning of this section.

1. **Special Bonus:** +1 attack per melee round at levels 2, 5, 8 and 12.

2. **Special Bonus:** +1 to save vs Horror Factor at levels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13 and 15.

3. **Types of Chemical Excretions:** Colony Identification, Chemical Alarm, Death Scent, Spit Acid and poison (the latter is described under #4, below).

4. **S.D.C. Poison (special):** The Warriors can bite using their mandibles, with the intention of poisoning their opponent as well as inflicting 4D6 S.D.C./Hit Point from the nipping bite itself (a nonpoisonous bite does 2D6 M.D.). The poison causes immediate nausea, vomiting and convulsions unless a successful save versus lethal poison is made. Poison damage is 6D6 S.D.C./Hit Points per each bite/hit, plus bite damage, and the following penalties: attacks per melee round and combat bonuses are reduced by half for one melee round (15 seconds). Thankfully, the wave of pain and nausea passes quickly (15 seconds).

A successful save vs lethal poison (14 or higher) means the character takes only 1D4 S.D.C. damage from the poison, plus 4D6 S.D.C. from the bite itself, but does not suffer from any nausea or penalties.

This poison is not anywhere near as powerful as the venom of the Leaper and has absolutely no effect on Mega-Damage creatures or other Xiticix. When fighting humanoids, Xiticix Warriors often secrete the poison to coat their weapons with the toxin. The poison coated weapon is only good for one strike from a small weapon like a short sword, knife, or spearhead, as well as blunt weapons like a mace or morning star, but is good for two attacks/strikes when used on large blade weapons like large swords and axes. The weapon must penetrate/cut the skin of one's opponent for the poison to have any possible effect.

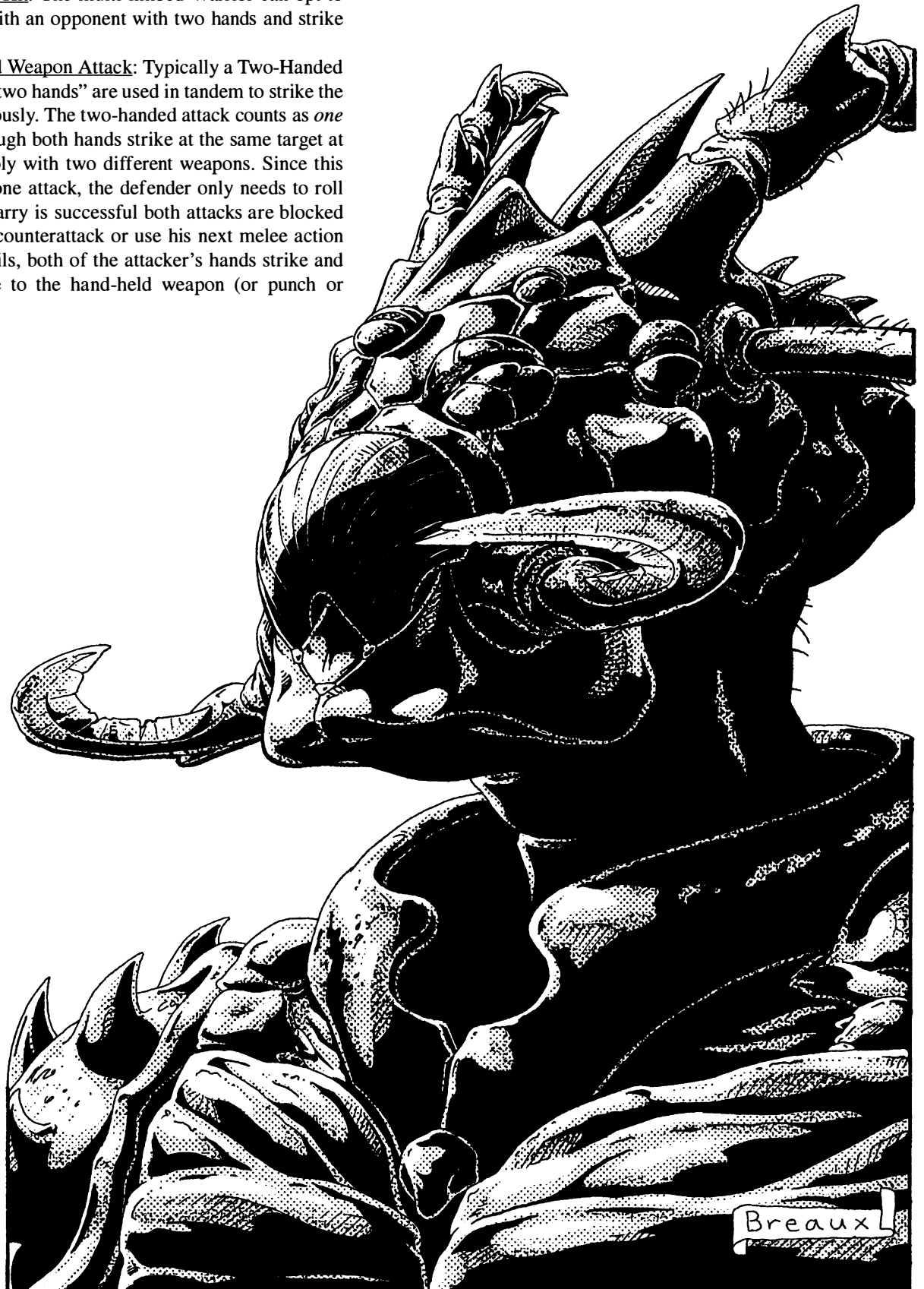
Special Combat Moves: A common tactic is to attack with two hands and parry with two. Furthermore, because the Xiticix practically have eyes in the back of their heads (thanks to their 340 degree range of peripheral vision and sensory abilities of their antennae), they can engage in *simultaneous* and multiple combat actions.

The extra free pair of arms gives the Warrior the option of parrying any attacks from one or two other opponents while actively engaged in fighting and parrying the one in front of him. Likewise, the Warrior can engage two or three opponents *simultaneously* while keeping one or two hands free to parry incoming attacks coming from his front, the sides and even behind!

Grapple/Wrestle & Hit: The multi-limbed Warrior can opt to hold, pin or grapple with an opponent with two hands and strike with his other two.

Two-Handed Paired Weapon Attack: Typically a Two-Handed Paired Attack means “two hands” are used in tandem to strike the same target simultaneously. The two-handed attack counts as *one melee action* even though both hands strike at the same target at the same time, probably with two different weapons. Since this dual strike counts as one attack, the defender only needs to roll once to parry. If the parry is successful both attacks are blocked and the defender can counterattack or use his next melee action to flee. If the parry fails, both of the attacker’s hands strike and do damage respective to the hand-held weapon (or punch or claw) used.

Normally, the attacker striking with Paired Weapons loses his automatic parry and is momentarily vulnerable to attack — any attempt to parry an attack immediately after a Two-Handed Paired Weapons Attack uses up a melee action. However, the four-armed Xiticix typically uses two limbs to strike and two to parry, so this rule does not apply to them. The extra pair of arms



and sensory abilities of the Xiticix make up for the normal delay in reaction time and the Warrior can easily attempt to parry any counterattack leveled at him (roll to parry as normal).

If the character feels confident his back is covered, or is in a killing frenzy, the Warrior *may* strike using all four arms at once! This is basically the same as before, with all four simultaneous blows directed at the same area of the victim (i.e. head, stomach, etc.). Like before, the four-armed attack counts as one melee action. Likewise, a successful parry blocks all four simultaneous strikes and an unsuccessful parry means all four strike and do damage (if punching or using claws, or if all weapons used are identical, just roll the damage for one and multiply by four; this is faster than rolling a truck load of dice). In either case, the Xiticix Warrior cannot parry the next attack leveled at him without using up one melee action/attack and is completely vulnerable to any attack that immediately follows that comes from above or behind.

Note: The Two-Handed Paired Weapon Attack is a common fighting tactic used by Warriors (the four-handed attack is only used in desperation, anger/frenzy or when feeling bold, powerful or overconfident). However, the Xiticix Warrior is free to use all four limbs to strike and parry in regular combat — i.e. one hand is used at a time to strike, with each individual strike counting as one melee attack. Fighting normally also means the Warrior can easily engage two opponents with two arms and parry attacks from them with the other two. Normal combat is a frequent mode of fighting.

The Xiticix can use a melee weapon or its hands/claws to punch or strike.

Remember, the Warrior can also parry close-range attacks from the sides or behind when fighting normally, but not when using the Two- or Four-Handed Paired Weapon Attack.

Simultaneous Attack: A simultaneous attack means the character forgoes his normal defensive parry and strikes at the same time as his opponent with one or two hands (two, if paired weapons or two-handed weapons are used). Both fighters hit each other at the same time, and since both are attacking, neither can (normally) parry the other's attack. Any roll to strike higher than five hits and does damage.

For normal, two-handed beings, a simultaneous attack means the two attackers can NOT defend/parry against his opponent's simultaneous attack; both hit each other at the same time. However, the four-limbed Xiticix Warrior can "try" to parry the incoming attack with his other pair of hands while striking at his opponent simultaneously! This combined attack means that the parry is done *without* benefit of any bonuses — a straight, unmodified roll — and the Xiticix's parry must be higher than his attacker's roll to strike. **Note:** This simultaneous strike and parry is not applicable to most characters, not even those with four or more arms. It is the Xiticix's extra limbs combined with its multiple eyes, antennae senses and insect-like brain that gives the creature this ability. Furthermore, only fighting class Xiticix can attempt this move: *Hunters*, *Warriors*, and *Super-Warriors*. Fighting class Xiticix who have lost both of their antennae can not do this combat move, nor can the Leaper because it only has two arms instead of the usual four.

Psionic Abilities: None.

R.C.C. Skills (equivalent to instincts): Wilderness Survival (+30%), Land Navigation (+30%), Navigation: Air (+25%), Basic Math (+20%), Detect Ambush (+10%), Detect

Concealment (+5%), W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Sword, W.P. Spear, W.P. Knife, W.P. Energy Weapon (i.e. Xiticix TK weapons) and three W.P. Ancient of choice, excluding Archery. Warriors love to fight, it is their life's mission.

Attacks Per Melee Round: Five attacks per melee round.

Bonuses (in addition to possible Attribute & Natural Ability Bonuses): +1 on initiative at levels 1, 3, 6, 9, 12 and 15; +2 to strike, +4 to parry, +1 to dodge, +2 to disarm, +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, can perform a kick attack, and gets an additional +4 to save vs poison and disease.

Weapons Notes: Love melee weapons and TK Weapons of all kinds. Most carry a Xiticix spear, a sickle short sword and 2-4 other weapons of choice (a spare weapon may mean two identical weapons). Only about one third carry a TK Rifle, 20% a Resin Spike Gun, and 5% a Resin Rifle.

Hand to Hand Combat: The supernatural P.S. of the Warrior means that punches do Mega-Damage. Damages below are representative of an average Xiticix Warrior's strength, and may increase for those that are extraordinarily strong (31 P.S. or higher. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for actual damages).

Critical strike on a roll of a natural 18-20 (double damage).

Restrained punch: 5D6 S.D.C.

Normal punch: 3D6 M.D.

Power Punch: 5D6 M.D. (counts as two attacks).

Leap Attack: 6D6 M.D. (counts as two attacks).

Bite attack: 3D6 M.D. plus poison damage.

Note: Warriors can also secrete poison and often coat their weapons with it, adding the poison effects to the damage of the weapon on a successful hit.

P.P.E.: 1D6x10+10

Xiticix

Super-Warrior R.C.C.

"Seen 'em rip apart our two Psi-Stalker scouts 'fore any of us knew what hit 'em. Big hulkin' sumofa . . . Huge. Musta been 10 or 12 feet. Six arms all swin' at once, slobberin' jaws dat spit acid. Like sumting outta yer worst nightmare. It musta been a General or sumpting 'cause it was pointin' an' dey was obeying. Warriors, Hunters an' Leapers all at its beck 'n call. I had heard tell of these . . . these Super-Warriors, but until dat day, I ain't never seen one. Don't never want to see one again, if I get my way.

Excerpt from the CS debriefings of Orion Greenfeld

The Super-Warrior is a fair to good strategist and tactician and serves as the Brigadier to Lieutenant General of the Xiticix forces. They are huge, six-armed monstrosities who love combat and enjoy killing. A Super-Warrior will be found among the company-sized squadrons and larger forces as well as on important missions, particularly those involving seek and destroy. At least one is also counted among the Queens' elite guards. Warriors, Hunters and Leapers will follow these powerhouse commanders to hell and back without question.

In addition to directly organizing, maintaining and leading military operations and defenses, the Super-Warrior can order around all Xiticix. Only the young and Elder Queens have greater authority.

Xiticix Super-Warrior R.C.C.

Alignment: Most humanoids consider them Diabolic evil, but in truth these obsessively self-sacrificing soldiers live and die in the service of their race and specific Hive Colony.

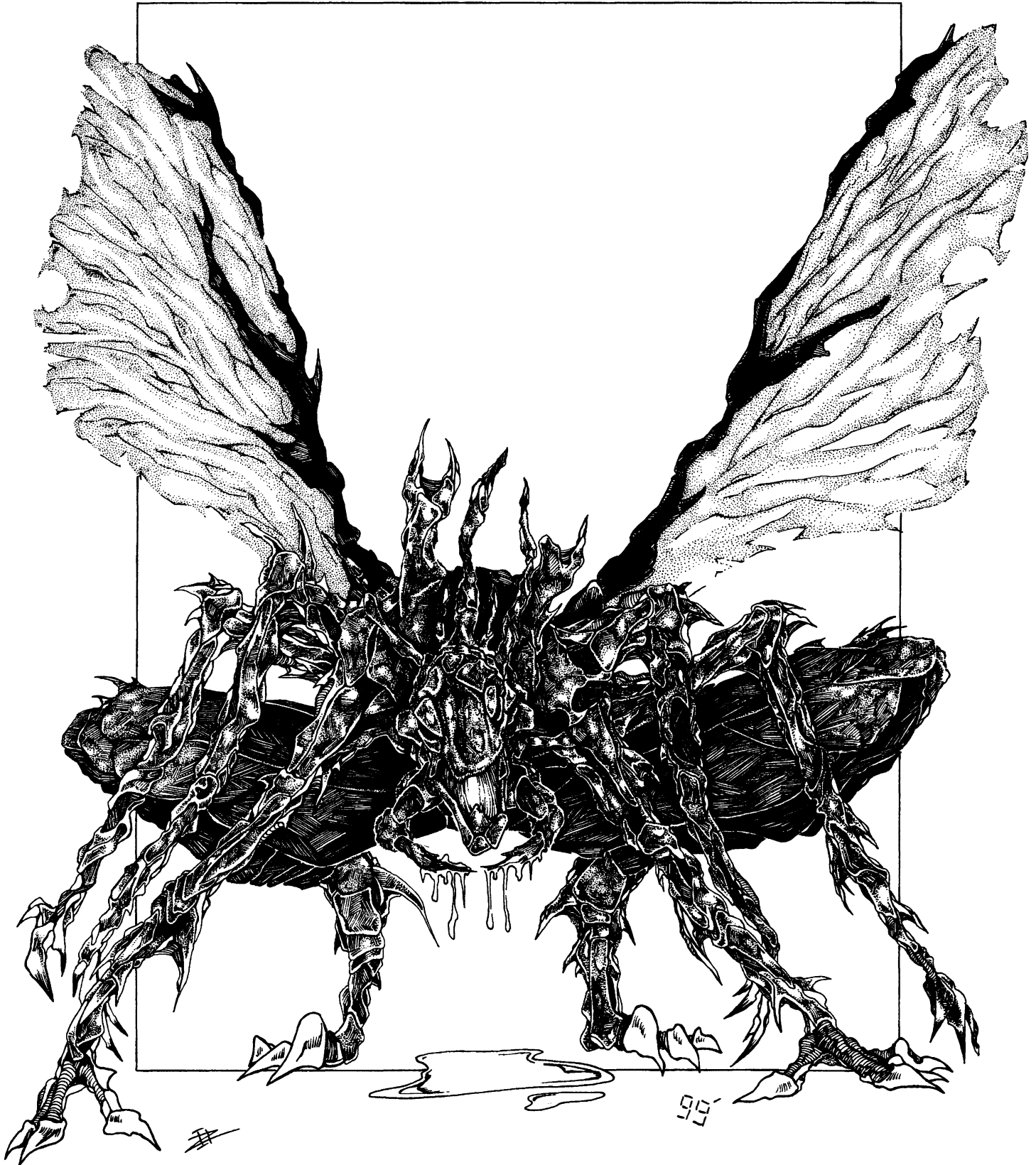
Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+11 and is considered to be in the same category as a supernatural predator, functioning on instinct as much as intellect. M.E. 2D6+14, M.A. 1D6+2, P.S. 2D6+28, P.P. 2D6+18, P.E. 1D6+18, P.B. 1D4, Spd. 3D6+24 running and

2D4x10+80 flying. The average flying speed is 120 (82 mph/131 km) with a possible maximum speed of 160 (105 mph/168 km).

All physical attributes are considered supernatural, including P.S. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for complete details regarding Supernatural P.S. and damage.

Size: 10-12 feet (3 to 3.6 m).

Weight: 700-1000 lbs (315 to 450 kg).



M.D.C. by Location (Adult):

Main Body: 2D4x10+60 +P.E. number. Mature adults get an additional 2D6 M.D.C. per level of experience.

Eyes: Large (2) — 20 each

Eyes: Small (5) — 15 each

Antennae (2) — 25 each

Arms (6) — 55 each

Legs (2) — 120 each

Wings (2) — 75 each

M.D.C. Resin Augmentation: Can increase M.D.C. of Main Body up to 40% and often does so!

M.D.C. (Young): 1D4x10+30 for main body and all other appendages are roughly half those of the adult.

Damage Capacity for Non-M.D.C. Worlds: Young: P.E.x3 to determine Hit Points and 2D6x10+25 for S.D.C. Double for full grown adults +P.E. attribute number, and 2D6 to Hit Points per level of experience. Antennae have 25 S.D.C. each, arms, legs and wings 100 each. Armor Rating (A.R.): Young: 11, Mature Adult: 16.

Horror Factor: 13 for an individual, or 16 if there are three or more Super-Warriors or one leading a squadron of 10 or more Xiticix Warriors.

Disposition: Highly aggressive, cunning, and ruthless. Fights to win, which means to *kill* its opposition. Super-Warriors are quick to action and merciless in combat. They rarely toy with their enemies and like to dispatch them quickly. As far as this Warrior is concerned, any non-Xiticix life form is an enemy, especially humanoids and other intelligent life forms.

Average Level of Experience: Typically 3-7th level, with 20% only 1-2nd level and 15% living long enough to attain levels 8-13. A Super-Warrior rarely lives beyond 13th level.

Natural Abilities: The standard abilities common to all Xiticix, plus enhanced healing. Don't forget the Super-Warrior's additional bonuses per level of experience in regard to many hunting/tracking and fighting abilities described in the beginning of this section.

1. **Special Bonus:** +1 attack per melee round at levels 2, 4, 8, 12 and 15.

2. **Special Bonus:** +2 to save vs Horror Factor at levels 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12 and 15.

3. **Superior, albeit limited, Bio-Regeneration (Special):** The Super-Warrior heals and regenerates lost limbs twice as fast as normal Xiticix. Thus, they recover M.D.C. at a rate of 2D6 per 24 hours (or 1D6 every 12 hours), regrow antennae in 1D6+3 months and lost wings or appendages in 2D6+6 months.

4. **Types of Chemical Excretions:** Colony Identification, Call to Arms, Chemical Alarm, Death Scent, Trail Scent and Spit Acid. The Super-Warrior can spit a powerful acid out to a maximum range of 100 feet (30.5 m) and is +3 to strike with his acid attack. The acid spray covers 1D4 square feet and does 1D4 M.D. per melee for up to 2D4 melee rounds.

Special Combat Moves: Fundamentally the same as the Xiticix Warrior, with a few additional considerations. The most important consideration is that the Super-Warrior has six arms, not four.

Grapple/Wrestle & Hit: The multi-limbed Warrior can opt to hold, pin or grapple with an opponent with 2-4 hands and strike with his 2-4 others.

Two-Handed Paired Weapon Attack: Same as the Warrior. Typically a Two-Handed Paired Attack means "two hands" are

used in tandem to strike the same target simultaneously. The two-handed attack counts as *one melee action* even though both hands strike at the same target at the same time, probably with two different weapons. Since this dual strike counts as one attack, the defender only needs to roll once to parry. If the parry is successful both attacks are blocked and the defender can counterattack or use his next melee action to flee. If the parry fails, both of the attacker's hands strike and do damage respective to the hand-held weapon (or punch or claw) used.

Normally, the attacker striking with Paired Weapons loses his automatic parry and is momentarily vulnerable to attack — any attempt to parry an attack immediately after a Two-Handed Paired Weapons Attack uses up a melee action. However, the four-armed Xiticix typically uses two limbs to strike and two to parry, so this rule does not apply to them. The extra pair of arms and sensory abilities of the Xiticix makes up for the normal delay in reaction time and can easily attempt to parry any counter-attack leveled at him (roll to parry as normal).

Four-Handed Paired Weapon Attack: The Super-Warrior will frequently use the Four-Handed Paired Weapon strike, using four arms at once! This is basically the same as before, with four simultaneous blows directed at the same area of the victim (i.e. head, stomach, etc.). Like before, the four-armed attack counts as one melee action. Likewise, a successful parry blocks all four simultaneous strikes and an unsuccessful parry means all four strike and do damage (if punching or using claws, or if all weapons used are identical, just roll the damage for one and multiply by four; this is faster than rolling a truck load of dice).

Unlike the ordinary Xiticix Warrior, the *Super-Warrior* still has a pair of arms he can use to parry the next attack leveled at him (and without using up one melee action/attack). He can also parry attacks that come from a second opponent from above or behind.

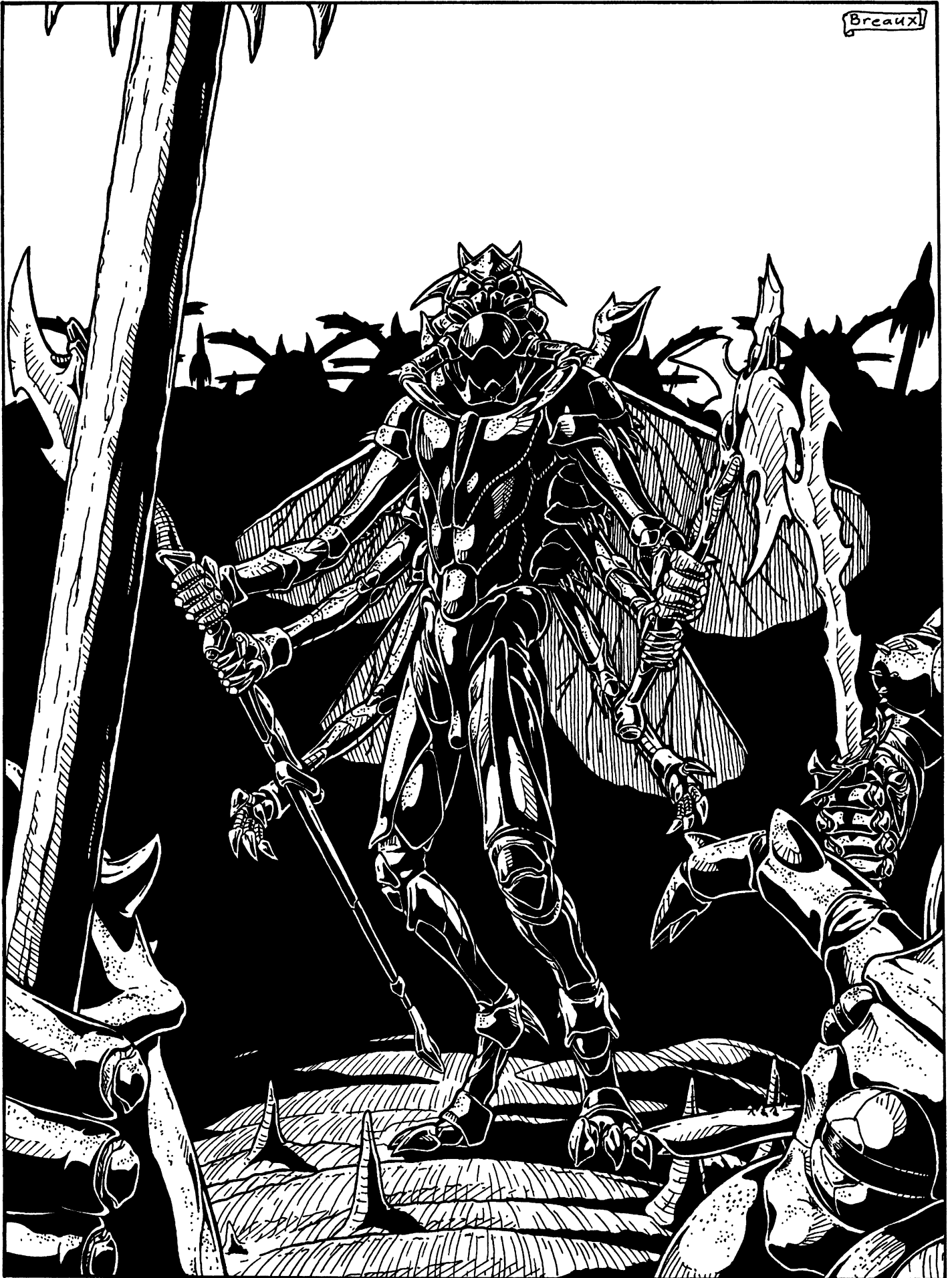
This staggering fighting ability makes Super-Warriors a favorite in gladiatorial arenas, particularly those found in Atlantis. Ordinary Xiticix Warriors are also popular but less coveted than the Super-Warrior. Gladiatorial slaves are typically chained or have their wings clipped.

Note: The Two- and Four-Handed Paired Weapon Attacks are frequently used fighting tactics of the Super-Warrior. However, the Xiticix Warrior is free to use all six limbs to strike and parry in regular combat — i.e. one hand is used at a time to strike, with each individual strike counting as one melee attack. Fighting normally also means the Warrior can easily engage 2-6 opponents striking and parrying as normal.

The Xiticix can use a melee weapon or its hands/claws to punch or strike.

Simultaneous Attack: A simultaneous attack means the character forgoes his normal defensive parry and strikes at the same time as his opponent with one or two hands. Both fighters hit each other at the same time, and since both are attacking, neither can (normally) parry the other's attack. Any roll to strike higher than five hits and does damage.

For normal, two-handed beings, a simultaneous attack means the two attackers can NOT defend/parry against his opponent's simultaneous attack; both hit each other at the same time. However, the SIX-limbed Super-Warrior can "try" to parry the incoming attack with his other two pairs of hands (4) while striking at his opponent simultaneously!



Since the character has four limbs to parry with, the parry is done at *half* the normal parry bonus, giving this monster a good chance of parrying his opponent's simultaneous attack. **Note:** This simultaneous strike and parry is not applicable to most characters, not even those with four or more arms. It is the Xiticix's extra limbs combined with its multiple eyes, antennae senses and insect-like brain that gives the creature this ability. Furthermore, only fighting class Xiticix can attempt this move.

Psionics: Considered a Major Psychic with the powers of See the Invisible, Deaden Senses, Mind Block and Electrokinetic. Needs a 12 or higher to save vs psionic attack.

I.S.P.: M.E. attribute x2 +1D6+1 per level of experience.

R.C.C. Skills (equivalent to instincts): Wilderness Survival (+40%), Land Navigation (+30%), Aerial Navigation (+25%), Basic Math (+30%), Detect Ambush (+20%), Detect Concealment (+15%), Intelligence (+10%), Prowl (+5%), W.P. Paired Weapons, W.P. Sword, W.P. Spear, W.P. Energy Weapon (i.e. Xiticix TK weapons) and three W.P. Ancient of choice, excluding Archery. They live to fight!

Attacks Per Melee Round: Six attacks per melee round.

Bonuses (in addition to possible Attribute & Natural Ability Bonuses): +4 on initiative, +3 to strike, +6 to parry, +2 to dodge, +3 to disarm, +6 to pull punch, +2 to roll with impact, can perform kick attacks, +6 to save vs possession, +4 to save vs mind control, and gets an additional +4 to save vs poison and disease.

Weapons Notes: Loves melee weapons and TK Weapons of all kinds. Most carry a Xiticix spear, large sword or axe, one or two pairs of Double-Daggers and 2-3 other weapons of choice (a spare weapon may mean two identical weapons). Only about one quarter carry a TK Rifle and 5% a Resin Rifle or TK Pistol. Most Super-Warriors prefer to rely on their natural abilities, psionics, brute strength and savagery.

Hand to Hand Combat: The supernatural P.S. of the Super-Warrior means that punches do Mega-Damage. Damages below are representative of a typical Super-Warrior's strength, and may increase for those that are extraordinarily strong (36 P.S. or higher). See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for actual damages.

Critical strike on the roll of a natural 18-20 (double damage).

Restrained Punch: 5D6 S.D.C.

Normal Punch: 4D6 M.D.

Normal Kick: 5D6 M.D.

Power Punch or Kick: 1D4x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks).

Bite attack: 5D6 M.D.

P.P.E.: 1D4x10+60

Xiticix Worker

"Thems was all over the place. Everywhere you turned. Just a trudging along about dere work. Didn't seem to give us no never mind 'til a Warrior come along."

Excerpt from the CS debriefings of Orion Greenfeld

Workers represent the labor force among the Xiticix race. Next to the Warriors, there are more Workers than any other type of Xiticix. Of course they are seldom seen by humans and D-Bees because they seldom leave the Hive Network. They are not explorers or scouts, but laborers who stay within the towers and

tunnels of the city. It is the Workers who help the Diggers build and haul materials. It is the Workers who assist the Nannies and help take care of the Xiticix babies. It is the Workers who attend to the Queen, just as they assist the Super-Warriors and Hunters. They deliver messages, transport food and materials, dig out collapsed tunnels, build walls and towers, carry out debris and waste, and help in any way possible. Moreover, they are loyal and obedient, following the orders given by their superiors quickly and efficiently, for that is their purpose — to work and help. And, when necessary, fight.

Unfortunately, work, not combat, is second nature to these drone-like laborers. They tend to be absorbed with the task at hand and do not think for themselves. Workers do not offer suggestions nor take any initiative on their own, they only do as they are told. Consequently, Workers are much less observant, cunning and alert than Warriors and many other Xiticix. In fact, they are easily confused, tricked and misled. Unless they are being attacked themselves or given direct orders, they tend to ignore trouble and conflict, and continue to do their work. This means Workers will often ignore intruders unless there is an obvious





threat or an authority figure to tell them otherwise. Of course, once directed to fight, they do so with the same intensity and methodical persistence as their other “work.” That is what they do.

Mature, adult Workers are about as tough as the immature, young Warriors, but they only fight when necessary. They have no special types of weapons or attacks and only basic combat abilities. Still, they are strong, possess great endurance and can serve as satisfactory auxiliary troops in a crisis. However, Workers are important as laborers, not fighters, even during a conflict. People seem to forget that there is more to war than fighting, and it is the Workers and other non-combat oriented Xiticix who handle the necessities of logistics and support. Workers (and Diggers) clear debris, help to rescue trapped and buried comrades, attend to the injured, remove the injured and dead, deliver messages, carry supplies, and so on. On the combat front they assist Diggers and Warriors in collapsing tunnels on the enemy, dividing the enemy, digging tunnels to go around and surround the enemy, erecting defenses, etc.

Workers do not generally use weapons, although they instinctively know how to use paired weapons and the sword. They also use blunt weapons (rocks, pieces of resin or debris) as clubs and tools. They closely resemble Warriors in their appearance, except that they are a bit smaller, more of a brownish gray, and one pair of arms sport giant, crab-like pincers. These scissor-like “claws” are used for carrying, chopping, cutting and digging, as well making excellent natural weapons when necessary.

The number of Workers is typically around one third of the population, a close second to the Warriors. In fact, at some hives the Workers match or exceed the number of Warriors. The range is typically 30-40% Workers and 35-40% Warriors. Note however, that if there are 40% Workers, there will be 30% Warriors. These two types of Xiticix and their numbers are interchangeable and usually balance each other out. It is usually during times of expansion and new colonization or war (all of which apply to the Xiticix of Rifts Earth) that Warriors outnumber Workers. In any case, Workers are usually found in and around the Xiticix Hive Network, in the towers and underground, but rarely in the field or outside Xiticix territory.

Xiticix Worker R.C.C.

Alignment: Most humanoids consider Workers to be Anarchist or Miscreant evil, but in truth these laborers live and die in the service of their race and are not aggressive.

Attributes: I.Q. 1D6+4 and is considered to be in the same category as a supernatural predator, functioning on instinct as much as intellect; M.E. 2D6+12, M.A. 1D4, P.S. 2D6+24, P.P. 2D6+10, P.E. 2D6+10, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 2D6+12 running, 1D6x10+60 flying (with and average speed of 90 or roughly 60 mph/96 km).

All physical attributes are now considered supernatural, including P.S. See the *Rifts® Conversion Book* for details as well as the general damages listed below under combat.

Size: 6 feet (1.8 m). The “claw” arm has a six foot (1.8 m) reach.

Weight: 400 lbs (180 kg).

M.D.C. by Location (Adult):

Main Body: 1D4x10+10, plus mature adults get an additional 1D6 M.D.C. per level of experience.

Eyes: Large (2) — 15 each

Eyes: Small (5) — 10 each

Antennae (2) — 15 each

Humanoid Arms (2) — 45 each

Claw Arms (2) — 90 each

Legs (2) — 65 each

Wings (2) — 60 each

M.D.C. Resin Augmentation: None.

M.D.C. (Young): 4D6+6 for main body and all other appendages are roughly half those of the adult.

Damage Capacity for Non-M.D.C. Worlds: Young: P.E. attribute number +6 to determine Hit Points and 2D6+10 for S.D.C. Double for full grown adults plus 1D6 to Hit Points per level of experience. Antennae have 20 S.D.C. each, arms and wings 50 each, claw arms 100, and legs 70. Armor Rating (A.R.): Young: 9, Mature Adult: 12.

Horror Factor: 8 or 12 for a squad of 10 or more.

Disposition: Quiet, obedient and hard working. Largely non-aggressive laborers who busy themselves with their work. They fight only when attacked, threatened or commanded into battle by other Xiticix higher in the hierarchy.

Average Level of Experience: Typically 3-6th level, with 25% only 1-2nd level, 20% living long enough to attain levels 7-11, and 5% reaching level 12 or higher.

Natural Abilities: In addition to the standard abilities common to all Xiticix, the Worker has incredible physical endurance and can carry twice the weight normally allowed by their P.S. score (P.S. x200 lbs/90 kg).

1. **Resistant to Cold and Heat (Special):** Cold, fire and heat, including magical ice and fire weapons and blasts, do half damage.

2. **Types of Chemical Excretions:** Colony Identification and Chemical Alarm.

Psionics: None.

R.C.C. Skills (equivalent to instincts): Wilderness Survival (+10%), Land Navigation (+20%), Navigation: Air (+10%), Basic Math (+10%), Whittling & Sculpting (+15%), W.P. Sword and W.P. Blunt. **Special Combat Moves:** None.

Attacks Per Melee Round: Four attacks per melee round.

Bonuses (in addition to possible Attribute & Natural Ability Bonuses): +1 to parry, +1 to dodge, +2 to pull punch, +4 to roll with impact, can perform a kick attack, +3 to save vs Horror Factor and gets an additional +2 to save vs poison and disease.

Weapons Notes: Never uses any weapons except for the Sickie Sword, Sickie Axe, and blunt items used as clubs or thrown rocks.

Hand to Hand Combat: Workers have little knowledge or skill in combat. The supernatural P.S. of the Worker means that punches do Mega-Damage. Damages below are representative of a typical Worker's strength, and may increase for those who are extraordinarily strong (31 P.S. or higher. See the Rifts Conversion Book for actual damages).

Workers have a pair of arms with articulated hands and a pair with giant crab-like pincers. The pincers can be quite effective in combat when used like giant scissors to snip and cut one's opponent.

Restrained Punch: 5D6 S.D.C.

Normal Punch or Kick: 3D6 M.D.

Power Punch or Kick: 6D6 M.D. (counts as two attacks).

Bite attack: 3D6 M.D.

Pincer/Scissor Claw Attack: 5D6 M.D.

P.P.E.: 1D6x10





Xiticix Weapons

“Then dem warriors showed up. An’ let me tell ya dey looked jus’ like giant, flyin’ demon ants, jus’ a swarmin’ and buzzin’, cept’n dey wuz as big as a man. Then dem guns o’ deres went off, but you only knew it ‘cause tings ‘round ya started poppin’ and breakin’ under the impact o’ the bullets. Damned guns are silent as hell. Always hated dem Techno-Wiz doo-dads, myself. Yessir I do. How deez damn bugs git such tings I don’ know.”

— CS excerpt from the debriefing of Orion Greenfeld

The ranged, Mega-Damage TK guns of the Xiticix are the same as they’ve always been, but now that these alien predators are properly classed as aliens with supernatural strength, their melee weapons are to be considered M.D.C. weapons. They are made from the same Mega-Damage resin that goes toward building the hive. Only this is “pure” resin, making them strong and difficult to break, even for the supernaturally strong Xiticix. In most cases, the weapon M.D. is added to the character’s super-

natural punching damage, described under each R.C.C. entry. If used by an ordinary human, D-Bee, Headhunter or basic cyborg then only use the weapon’s M.D. (because the character normally inflicts only S.D.C. damage). The four-armed Xiticix fighters are likely to be armed with 2-4 different weapons and may use a different weapon for each melee attack.

Weapon Notes

- Captured Xiticix weapons are sometimes adopted by Juicers, Crazies, Headhunters, ‘Borgs, dragons, demons and other super-strong beings as well as reasonably strong (P.S. 21 or higher) Wilderness Scouts, Woodsmen, Native Americans, Psi-Stalkers, Noli-Bushmen, Great Hunters, Mastadonoids, and other D-Bees. The Coalition Military never uses Xiticix weapons and usually destroys any they acquire.
- Resin weapons are *rare* outside of Xiticix Territory, i.e. Manitoba, Minnesota, North Dakota and Northern Wisconsin. Most are commonly found in the hands of **Psi-Stalkers**, **Great Hunters** and **Noli Bushmen** living in southern Canada (namely southern Manitoba and western Ontario) or the middle northern United States, mainly Minnesota, the Dakotas, and Wisconsin.
- Xiticix weapons tend to be large and heavy by human standards (typically 2-5 times heavier than a comparable human weapon), making them awkward to use by humans and human-like D-Bees. This is because they are made of heavy concrete-like resin sometimes reinforced with shards and scraps of M.D.C. materials underneath as part of the weapon’s framework. Of course, the weight means nothing to these *supernaturally strong* creatures.

Ultimately, anybody strong enough to wield the weapon (typically P.S. 21 or greater) can use them. However, weaker characters strike and parry without benefit of attribute or skill bonuses. Other characters with supernatural strength use them the same as Xiticix, without penalty.

- Most resin weapons appear to be crude and look as if they were carved from stone or molded from concrete. This concrete appearance is accentuated by their light gray or grayish tan color and rough surface texture.
- The Xiticix rarely use weapons not of Xiticix manufacture, meaning they will never use human or D-Bee energy weapons, but, in a pinch, may use a melee weapon such as a Vibro-Blade or magic weapon. However, once the crisis that forced them to use a non-Xiticix weapon is over, they will discard it.



Xiticix Bayonet & Hand-Held Knives

This weapon is a simple, narrow, resin blade, sharp on both edges and designed for stabbing and slashing. The bayonet is a standard feature on the Xiticix TK Rifle and is sometimes adhered to the body of Warriors and other fighting class Xiticix as extra spikes to be used in combat or to look more menacing.

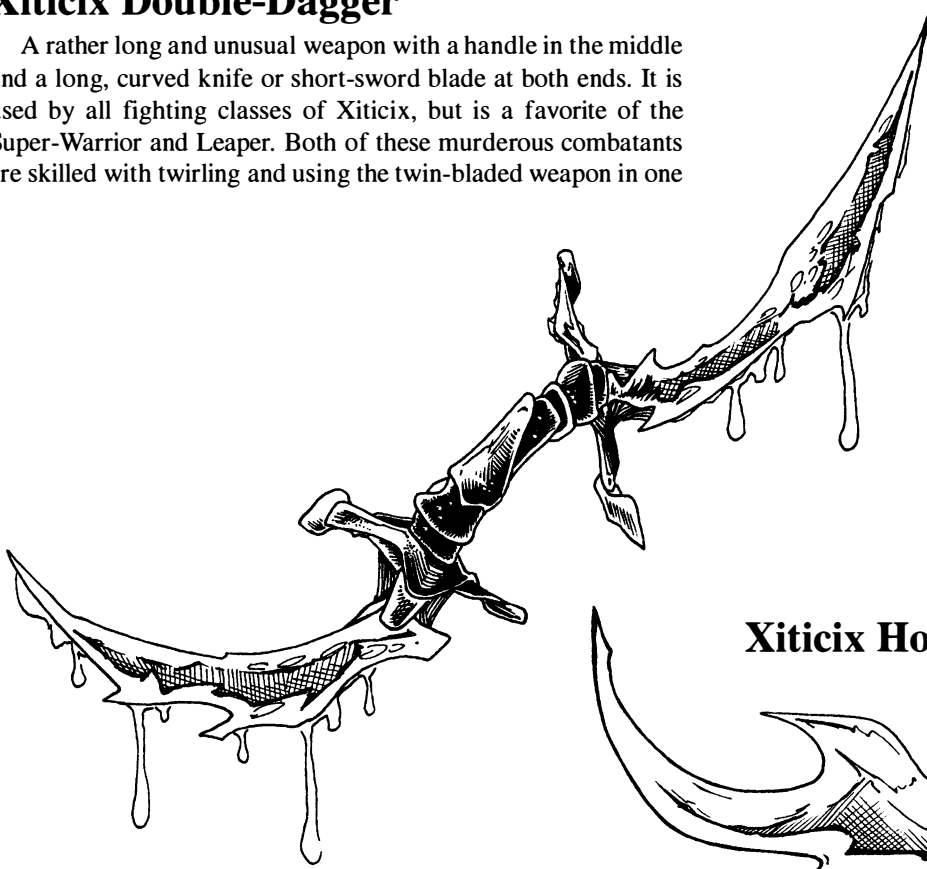
Weight: 3-4 lbs (1.3 to 1.8 kg).

Mega-Damage: 1D4 M.D. from the weapon + Supernatural P.S. punching damage.

Market Cost: 3,000-5,000 credits, uncommon.

Xiticix Double-Dagger

A rather long and unusual weapon with a handle in the middle and a long, curved knife or short-sword blade at both ends. It is used by all fighting classes of Xiticix, but is a favorite of the Super-Warrior and Leaper. Both of these murderous combatants are skilled with twirling and using the twin-bladed weapon in one



hand. The blade is designed so that one end is facing out to be used as a knife, while the other rests flush against the arm. This latter position enables the user to parry incoming attacks with the flick of his wrist and quickly counterstrike or parry and hit an enemy coming up from the side or behind.

Weight: 6-7 lbs (2.7 to 3.1 kg).

Mega-Damage: 2D4+2 M.D. from the weapon + Supernatural P.S. punching damage.

Leapers (not Super-Warriors) frequently coat the weapon with their lethal M.D. poison to inflict considerably more damage.

Poison Damage: 1D4x100 S.D.C./Hit Points to humans and most D-Bees — 4D6 M.D., plus 1D6 M.D. additional damage at the beginning of each new melee round for 1D6 melees. The poison does its full damage because the blades of the Double-Dagger are designed to hold the poison (they positively drip with venom) and because the poison is freshly secreted by the Leaper so it is at full strength. Covering the blades counts as one melee action/attack.

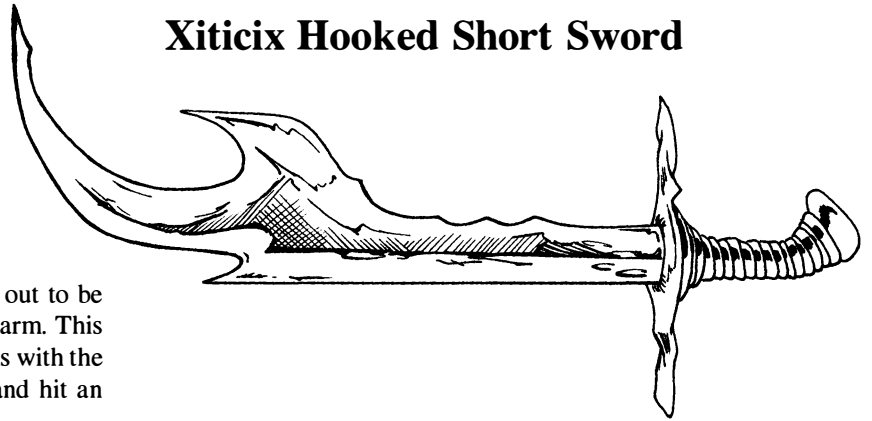
The poison is only effective against opponents who have exposed skin, because the weapon must *cut* flesh to inflict damage. On arrows and spears, the dose of poison is only good for one hit, but on the Double-Dagger, swords, axes and other large blade weapons, the poison can inflict damage from two cutting attacks before it is sufficiently wiped clean from the blade. See the description for #4. *Poisonous Bite* described under the Natural Abilities of the Leaper for complete details.

Range: Hand-held melee weapon, but can be thrown (without bonuses) up to 50 feet (15.2 m). -1 to strike for each additional 10 feet (3 m).

Bonuses: +1 to strike and +2 to parry when used in hand to hand combat; do not apply when thrown.

Market Cost: 10,000-15,000 credits; very rare.

Xiticix Hooked Short Sword



The Xiticix are fond of hooked and curved blades with serrated edges. The Hooked Short Sword is a weapon used for combat, parrying and disarming opponents (catching one's adversary's weapon with the hook and twisting in such a way as to disarm him). The heavier tip makes the weapon good for chopping and the serrated part enables the Xiticix to use the sword as a saw to cut through M.D.C. cables, chains, pillars and supports.

Weight: 8-10 lbs (3.6 to 4.5 kg).

Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D. + Supernatural P.S. punching damage.

Bonuses: +1 to strike, +2 to parry, +3 to disarm.

Market Cost: 8,000-12,000 credits; uncommon.

Xiticix Mace or Morning Star

This is a large club that ends with a spiked ball. It is used as a hammering weapon that can be used one two-handed by the Xiticix.

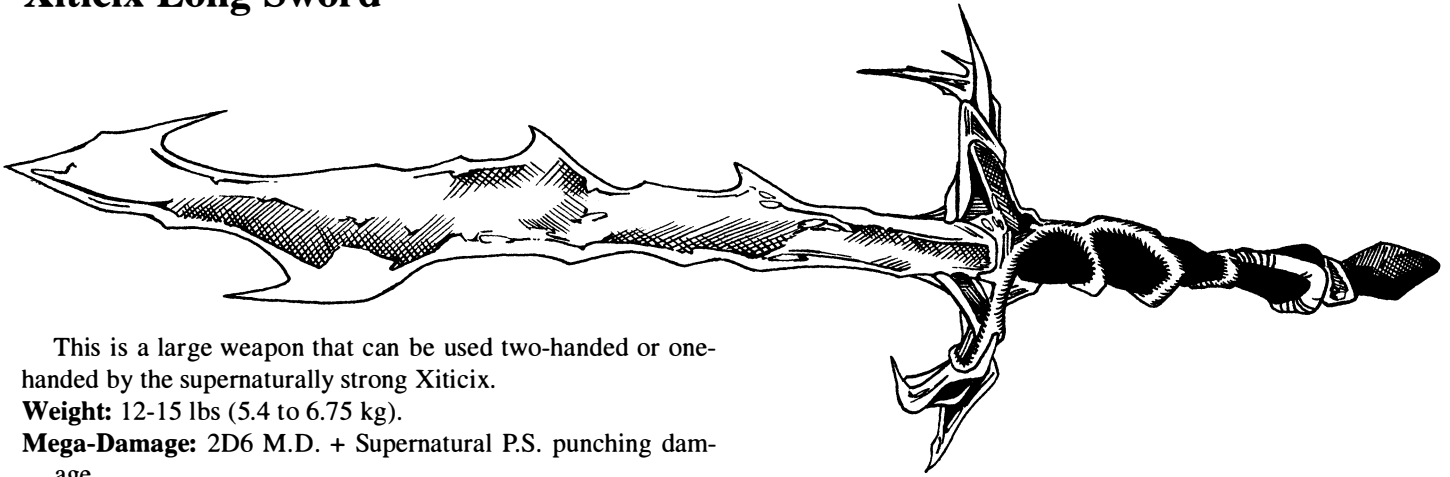
Weight: 14-18 lbs (6.3 to 8 kg).

Mega-Damage: 1D6+4 M.D. + Supernatural P.S. punching damage.

Bonuses: +1 to parry and +1 to disarm.

Market Cost: 11,000-15,000 credits; rare.

Xiticix Long Sword



This is a large weapon that can be used two-handed or one-handed by the supernaturally strong Xiticix.

Weight: 12-15 lbs (5.4 to 6.75 kg).

Mega-Damage: 2D6 M.D. + Supernatural P.S. punching damage.

Bonuses: +1 to parry and +1 to disarm.

Market Cost: 12,000-15,000 credits; uncommon.



Xiticix Spear

The spear is among the Xiticix Warriors favorite weapons and can be used as a stabbing, parrying, blunt (when using the end without the blade) and throwing weapon. Its versatility also means it can be used one-handed or two.

Weight: 10-12 lbs (4.5 to 5.4 kg).

Mega-Damage: 1D6+3 M.D. as a stabbing, slashing or thrown weapon + Supernatural P.S. punching damage, but only 1D4 M.D. + P.S. punch damage as a blunt weapon.

Range: A hand-held melee weapon that can be thrown effectively (by Xiticix) up to 300 feet (91.5 m) away. 120 feet (36 m) by most strong characters (bionic or robot P.S. of 21 or higher) and only about 60 feet (18.3 m) for most humans and D-Bees.

Bonuses: +1 to disarm and +2 to parry. +3 to strike when thrown.

Market Cost: 7,000-10,000 credits; uncommon.

Xiticix Spike Whip

This resin-molded weapon is a wicked looking spiked ball attached to a length of cord/fiber and used like a classic ball and chain weapon. The handle end has a small spike or blade built into it, allowing the Xiticix Warrior to use it as a dagger and to parry attacks.

Weight: 12-15 lbs (5.4 to 6.75 kg).

Mega-Damage: 1D6+4 M.D. + Supernatural P.S. punching damage.

Range: Hand-held melee weapon with an extended 5-6 foot (1.5 to 1.8 m) range/length from the hand to the whipping ball of the weapon.



Bonuses: +1 to strike, +3 to disarm, +2 to entangle. Can not be thrown well. Bonuses do not apply if the character does not also have W.P. Ball & Chain or W.P. Whip.

Market Cost: 10,000-14,000 credits; rare.

Xiticix Beheading Axe

This is big two-handed weapon ends with a large axe blade. It is a favorite of Xiticix Warriors and especially Super-Warriors. The muscle put behind this two-handed blade makes it a truly lethal weapon.

Weight: 15-20 lbs (6.75 to 9 kg).

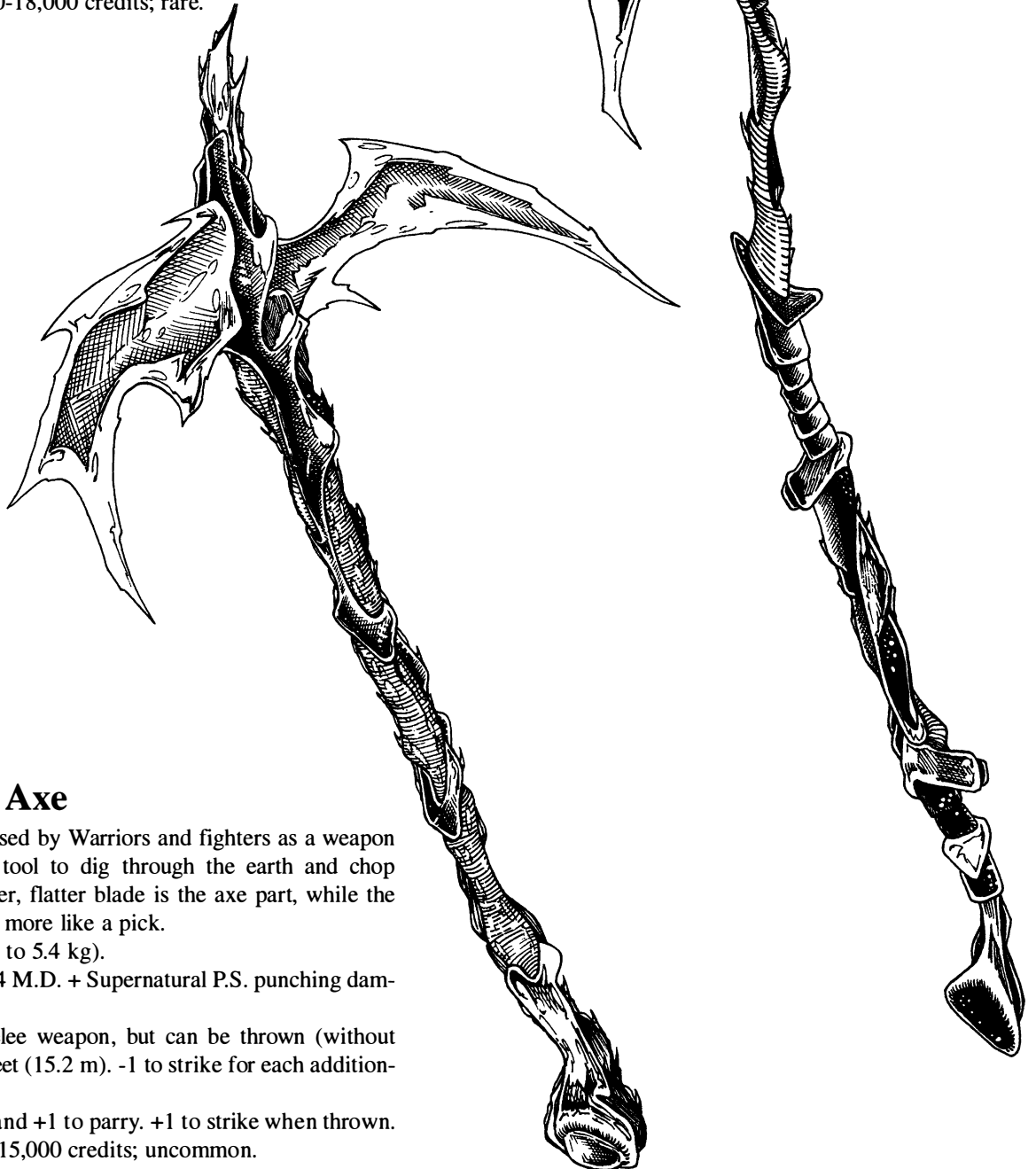
Mega-Damage: 1D6+3 M.D. + Supernatural P.S. punching damage when used *one-handed*, and bonuses listed below do not apply.

Or 2D6+6 M.D. + Supernatural P.S. damage when used two-handed! The bonuses listed for the axe apply only when used two-handed.

Range: Hand-held melee weapon.

Bonuses: +3 to strike and +1 to parry. Can not be thrown well and is -6 to strike (no bonuses) with an effective range of 20 feet (6.1 m); -2 per each additional 10 feet (3 m).

Market Cost: 15,000-18,000 credits; rare.



Xiticix Sickle Axe

The Sickle Axe is used by Warriors and fighters as a weapon and by Workers as a tool to dig through the earth and chop through rock. The wider, flatter blade is the axe part, while the narrow curved blade is more like a pick.

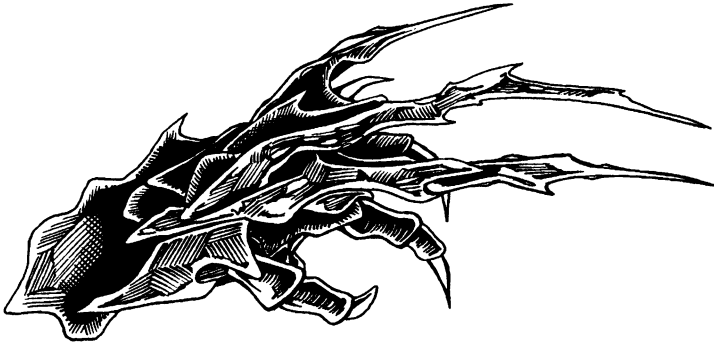
Weight: 10-12 lbs (4.5 to 5.4 kg).

Mega-Damage: 1D6+4 M.D. + Supernatural P.S. punching damage.

Range: Hand-held melee weapon, but can be thrown (without bonuses) up to 50 feet (15.2 m). -1 to strike for each additional 10 feet (3 m).

Bonuses: +2 to strike and +1 to parry. +1 to strike when thrown.

Market Cost: 12,000-15,000 credits; uncommon.



Resin Claws

A three blade claw that is attached to the hand of Xiticix Warriors. Only fighting class Xiticix may get this enhancement. Similar spikes and blades may be attached to the forearm, elbows, shoulders, and knees.

Weight: 8-10 lbs (3.6 to 4.5 kg).

Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D. + Supernatural P.S. punching damage.

Bonuses: +1 to parry and +1 to disarm.

Market Cost: Available only to Xiticix.

Note: Can be created and applied by the Digger or Queen.

Resin Shoulder Spikes

Additional armor and protection for the shoulder of the fighting class Xiticix, most commonly used by Warriors and Leapers.

Weight: 10-12 lbs (4.5 to 5.4 kg).

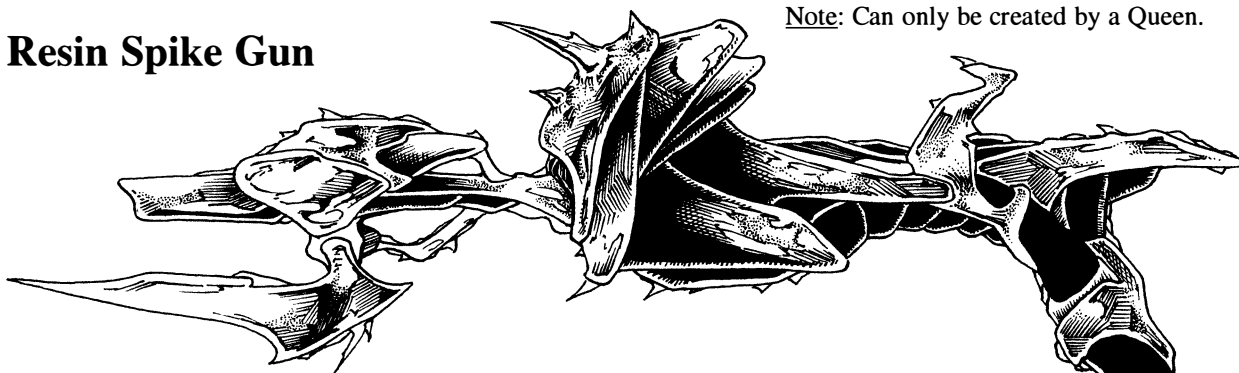
M.D.C. Bonus: +15 to M.D.C. of the arm and it must be destroyed before the upper arm can be severed.

Mega-Damage: +1D6 M.D. to shoulder blocks and ram attacks.

Market Cost: Available only to Xiticix.

Note: Can be created and applied by the Digger or Queen.

Resin Spike Gun



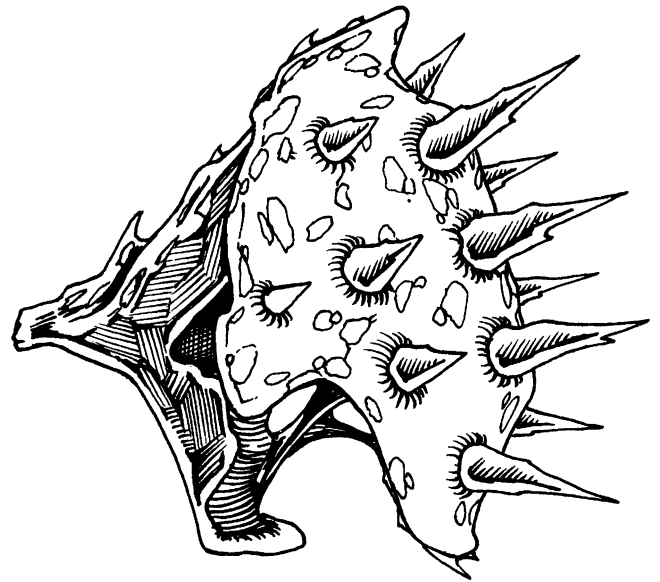
A sub-machinegun type of automatic weapon or small assault rifle that fires resin spikes. Used only by the Warriors.

Weight: 20 lbs (9 kg).

Mega-Damage: 1D6 M.D. per three spike burst; otherwise 2 M.D. per single shot.

Comes standard with a Bayonet (1D4 M.D.).

Range: 400 feet (122 m). Defenders can attempt to dodge but do so with a penalty of -6.



Shooting Shoulder Spikes

This is effectively a Techno-Wizard weapon somehow created by the Queen (nobody has ever seen it done). Presumably this is some sort of instinctive ability, because the types of Techno-Wizard like weapons are extremely limited, and magic is not normally known or practiced by the Xiticix.

Weight: 10-12 lbs (4.5 to 5.4 kg).

M.D.C. Bonus: +15 to M.D.C. of the arm and it must be destroyed before the upper arm can be severed.

Mega-Damage: +1D6 M.D. to shoulder blocks and ram attacks. A flying resin projectile does one M.D. point of damage.

Range: 60 feet (18.3 m); no bonuses to strike apply. Defenders can attempt to dodge but do so with a penalty of -3.

Rate of Fire: One at a time or in volleys of 2, 4 or 6. Whether one or a volley is fired it counts as one melee action/attack. Roll once to strike, either all the spikes in the volley hit or all miss.

Payload: 12; costs 12 P.P.E. or 24 I.S.P. to magically recreate the shooting spikes. Reloading can be done by the user or a Xiticix Queen.

Market Cost: Available only to Xiticix.

Note: Can only be created by a Queen.

Rate of Fire: Each three spike burst counts as one melee attack/action. Roll once to strike, either all the spikes in the burst hit or all miss.

Payload: 60 rounds for 20 bursts. It costs 24 P.P.E. or 48 I.S.P. to magically recreate the shooting spikes. Reloading can be done by the shooter or a Xiticix Queen.

Market Cost: 90,000-120,00 credits; considered a Techno-Wizard weapon and is very rare.

Note: Can only be created by the Queen.



Resin Spitter

Also known as the “Resin Gun” or “Glop Rifle,” this weapon fires globs of quick drying resin similar to the concrete-like material produced by the Digger and Queen used for building.

As noted, each glob represents about three feet (0.9 m) of resin which is enough to cover roughly half of a human-sized target. A creature must be covered halfway to suffer the penalties listed below. And to be restrained completely, the character must be “globbed” twice, once at the feet and legs, and once above the waist. Meanwhile, a twelve foot (3.6 m) creature would have to be hit on twice just to cover the feet and legs, and four times to have his entire body covered from shoulders to toes.

Weight: 40 lbs (18 kg); most humanoids must use two hands to aim and shoot, otherwise they are -4 to strike. Beings with supernatural strength, or a bionic or robot P.S. of 30 or higher, can fire the rifle with one hand.

Damage: None per se, but the heavy goop clings to the clothes, body armor and the body and impairs movement. It is very sticky, difficult to remove and quickly hardens in 1D4+1 melee rounds (30-75 seconds)! See #5. *Resin Glob Attack* under the **Digger** for complete details on its effects.

Comes standard with a Bayonet (1D4 M.D.).

Rate of Fire: Twice every round (15 seconds), with each glob attack counting as one of the shooter’s melee actions/attacks.

Range: 240 feet (73 m).

Payload: 8 blasts. Requires 30 P.P.E. or 60 I.S.P. to recharge/reload with 8 more resin glob attacks.

Market Cost: 130,000-160,000 credits; considered a Techno-Wizard weapon and is very rare.

Note: Only the Queen can create a working resin gun. Nobody knows exactly how she does it.

TK-Rifle

The TK-Rifle works very similar to the principles of Techno-Wizardry and the TK-Machinegun.

Weight: 20 lbs (9 kg).

Mega-Damage: 4D6 M.D. per blast.

Comes standard with a bayonet (1D4 M.D.); Warriors may secrete their poison on the blade.

Range: 4000 feet (1219 m). Defenders can attempt to dodge but do so with a penalty of -6.

Rate of Fire: Each three spike burst counts as one melee attack/action. Roll once to strike, either all the spikes in the burst hit or all miss.

Payload: 40 blasts. It costs 20 P.P.E. or 40 I.S.P. to magically recharge. Reloading can be done by the shooter or a Xiticix Queen.

Market Cost: 110,000-150,000 credits; considered a Techno-Wizard weapon and is rare.

Note: Can only be created by the Queen.



Breaux



Prelude to War

The Coalition States — Circa 105 P.A.

The Coalition States have been collating information about the strange, alien insectoids for over 20 years, however, the majority of their breakthrough discoveries have come only in the last five. In addition to Military Intelligence, which has unearthed a tremendous amount of information about the Xiticix society, hierarchy, behavior and tactics, the CS has also captured live specimens (mostly Warriors) and have studied their physiology and genetic structure. One result of that genetic research has been the creation of the mutant, **Xiticix Killer**, the handiwork of the Lone Star Complex.

The Xiticix (pronounced Zeye-tick-icks) are a race of insect-like humanoids from another dimension. The first bands of Xiticix were recorded about 25 years ago, around 80 P.A., but it is likely that the swarm was inadvertently transported to Rifts Earth, perhaps 20-30 years earlier. They just went unnoticed because they inhabited the northern wilderness of Minnesota and Manitoba. The fact that at least three sizeable colonies were already in place when the Coalition States first investigated in 86 P.A. is further evidence that the Xiticix had been quietly establishing their cities for years prior to their discovery. The Xiticix threat became known only when they began to encroach on the strong-holds of humankind. Tales of murderous “insect people” in the northern forests had been told by Native Americans and woodsmen for years, dating as far back as 59 P.A. In fact, it was probably the Xiticix who were responsible for many disappearances of people in lower Manitoba — which earned the region a reputation for being haunted and troubled by demons since about 65 P.A. Furthermore, there is little doubt that Xiticix were lumped into the general classifications of “monsters” and “demons” for years.

These strange, insect beings are alien and difficult for humans to understand (and vice versa), they breed rapidly, and the majority stay concealed *inside* their strange, tower-like buildings and hidden underground tunnel complexes. Furthermore, there is so much activity among “flyers” coming and going from these Hive Networks that it’s impossible to tell whether the ones leaving are the same ones who just returned a short while earlier. Complicating the matter is the fact that most Xiticix look nearly identical to one another (at least to humans), so identifying specific Xiticix is not unlike trying to recognize a specific bee or ant from a hive of thousands. All of this makes it impossible to estimate their true numbers. Only five years ago, around 100 P.A., most scholars placed their numbers at about 20,000 while the Coalition States estimated that there were at least 60,000, and some Wilderness Scouts insisted the aliens numbered into the hundreds of thousands.

New & Reformulated Data About the Xiticix

Surprisingly, it has been the Coalition States (specifically Iron Heart and Chi-Town) who has been instrumental in uncovering

crucial data about these strange aliens — information they are willing to share. The following is the data released by the Coalition States to communities in and around the Xiticix Hivelands, as well as to Free Quebec, Lazlo, New Lazlo, The Kingdom of Montreal and even Tolkeen.

Additional information, reports, rumors and hearsay from trusted Psi-Stalkers and human woodsmen and Wilderness Scouts, has supported, confirmed and added to the Coalition’s own firsthand observations and knowledge.

1. The insect aliens are an aggressive race of warriors who are extremely territorial. They seem to tolerate only animal life and small groups of inconspicuous humanoids of seven or less. Obvious intruders, especially large or noisy robots and vehicles, are instantly attacked even if alone — presumably they are too large and fearsome to be ignored. Humanoids who are spotted within ten miles (16 km) of a Xiticix Hive City (i.e. Hive Network) are also attacked. Entering a Hive City will agitate the entire community and elicit a horde of warriors to attack like a swarm of angry bees.

2. The CS discovered that their earlier estimates were grossly incorrect, and even the Wilderness Scouts were off by at least a million!

Today the CS estimates the total Xiticix population to range between three and four million. To be safe, the CS assumes there are more rather than less (The Council of Learning at Lazlo estimates 1.6 to 2 million). At the Xiticix’s current unchecked rate of growth there will be approximately 10-12 million in two years, 16-20 million in three, 30+ million in four and over 50 million in five! Although Lazlo’s figures are about 30% lower, they are equally frightening with their own estimates that place the population over 30 million in five years. If something is going to be done about the Xiticix it must be soon. Very soon.

3. Most Xiticix (60-70%) rarely come to the surface and are seldom seen. They live their entire lives in the dimly lit inner sanctum of the Hive Network or behind the walls of the giant concrete, skyscraper-like towers.

Most people think there are only two or three types of Xiticix because they only see *Warriors and Workers*, and have heard about the *Queen*, however, concealed within the Hive Network are a number of strange and specialized insect-like aliens who rarely poke their heads outside. The CS has catalogued all nine (not including Xiticix larvae):

Worker
Digger
Leaper
Warrior
Hunter/Scout
Nannie/Nurse
Super-Warrior
Queen, Young — Queen, Elder



4. A vast network of tunnels and chambers are located inside and underneath the exterior towers/buildings, connecting virtually every tower to one another!

The CS knows this because they have actually made raids *inside* the Hive Complex, fighting every inch of the way. The brave human volunteers (including CS Psychics) and Dog Boys who have penetrated into the secret interior of the Hive Network transmit radio and video information as they go — most never escape as these “expeditionary forces” typically experience an 85-100% mortality rate. They have recorded Warriors, Workers, Hunters, Diggers, Nannies and once, even made it to the chamber of a young Queen giving birth and being attended by at least a hundred other Xiticix, mostly Workers. The scenes of relentless combat and men getting torn, hacked and chewed to pieces is painful to view, but their sacrifice has given the CS (and the world) invaluable information.

5. The CS has correctly surmised that there must be more than one Queen. No matter how prodigious a single Queen may be, there are just too many Xiticix for there not to be dozens, perhaps hundreds of these living baby factories.

6. CS Psychics have confirmed that the Xiticix are aggressive beings who regard all life forms as their rivals and enemies. They have only two central motivations: Protect the Hive Network and multiply. All who get in their way must be eliminated.

7. The Queen(s) is the weak link, but not weak enough. Psychics have also confirmed there are numerous “young Queens” (they believe 50-100 at each of the hive colonies.) and one Elder Queen. They have also confirmed that all Queens are located deep inside the labyrinth of tunnels that is the Hive Network, with the Elder Queen (never seen by CS troops) as the most important, best hidden and most protected. She is effectively the All-Mother, supreme leader and heart of the hive. However, they know that if she is slain, one of the other young Queens will take her place.

This information has spawned the theory that if *all* the Queens could be located and killed, the Xiticix would be effectively neutered and unable to produce new young. However, scientists have speculated that a dozen or more larval Queens (i.e. potential Queens) probably exist within the newborn population, and that it *may* be possible for a male Xiticix to actually mutate and transform into a new Queen in times of disaster to keep the species going. Such a transformation is possible among some Earth insects. The question is, can the Xiticix? (**Editor’s Note:** This is good speculation on the part of the CS, but it is not true. Adult males, or Nannies for that matter, can not “transform” into a Queen. However, select Xiticix in larval form can.)

8. All other species of Xiticix defend the Queens and Hive Network to the death. The Hive and the Elder Queen is everything.

9. Only Warriors, Hunters and Leapers go on protracted missions away from the Hive Network on scouting missions and border patrols. **Note:** The CS typically includes the Super-Warrior in with “Warriors” as these giants are the Warriors’ leaders.

10. There are known to be at least four separate Xiticix Hive Networks or colonies, perhaps as many as seven or eight. Most are located in Manitoba and Minnesota.

11. The Xiticix are in the middle of a population explosion, multiplying on a nearly geometric level. Their overall population is increasing by 60-70% annually! At this rate, Xiticix could engulf most of the continent, north of Mexico, within 30-50 years! The Coalition States, Free Quebec, Federation of Magic, Lazlo and most other independent kingdoms seem destined to fall to the overwhelming swarms.

The Conclusion: Mass extermination of the Xiticix is the only solution for the survival of competing life forms (i.e. humans). Only Lazlo (and unbeknownst to anybody, Lord Splynncryth of Atlantis) has reached the same conclusion.

• **CS Plan A: Complete and total genocide.** Complete genocide is the best formula for success, because unlike most other alien life forms who are willing to relocate, the Xiticix are not. The insect aliens start at one central point, grow and spread out. If one part of the Hive Network is destroyed, they retreat and regroup to the central region of the hive before spreading out to rebuild. Thus, if all Xiticix could be destroyed, they would be gone forever.

Problems with Plan A: Close combat is an absolute must and the cost in lives will be tremendous. Even if the CS uses extreme force (even nuclear weapons?) to pulverize the aboveground structures and Xiticix defenders, an estimated 35-55% would survive underground, which is also where the Queens are hidden. This means troops will be required to go tunnel by tunnel, probably trying to seal off one section at a time, and killing every creature they encounter. The presence of "Diggers" and Workers with their ability to dig tunnels and excavate at amazing speed makes sealing off sections and containing the enemy unlikely (10% chance). Even if it were possible, this is an incredibly time consuming, difficult, and deadly operation, but some concerted effort to purge the tunnels is necessary, because if even one Queen survives, the Xiticix will repopulate and the nightmare will be reborn.

Another problem is that once CS forces are committed, there is no turning back. The Xiticix are such that a mass assault upon them will earn the Coalition forces their lasting enmity. From that day forward the Xiticix would see all "Dead Boys" and any CS vehicle, bot, or power armor with the Death's Head motif as a mortal enemy to be struck down and destroyed whenever encountered. Furthermore, unless crippled, the Xiticix are likely to target CS communities for retaliatory extermination.

This is an all or nothing proposition, and the Coalition understands that. They just aren't certain they can win.

Because of the Coalition States' conflicts with *Free Quebec* and *Tolkeen*, they do not have the manpower to engage the Xiticix on this level. It is also possible that these wars, especially if one or both lasts for more than a year or two, could leave the CS so weakened that they could not launch such an incredible offensive with any real chance of success. Thus, the Coalition's current wars could doom them and all of North America along with them! Additionally, the CS will not join forces with any of its enemies, particularly Lazlo, or any nonhumans.

• Plan B: Holding Tactics. This what the CS is currently doing: Observing, attacking and undermining the enemy with surgical strikes, undercover operatives, mercenaries, the top secret Xiticix Killer mutants and other strategies and tactics. However, their efforts are barely making a dent. The problem is that the Coalition Military must proceed with caution and subterfuge. If the Xiticix believe a specific, identifiable "group" is a dangerous rival, they will swarm that enemy and fight until it is destroyed. This means most CS raiders can not use the standard Dead Boy armor and CS equipment, nor allow themselves to be followed back to any CS city or outpost. If the Xiticix make the connection, the monsters will attack anybody who looks like this "enemy" whenever they are encountered, and may swarm against CS cities. Consequently, recognizable CS troops operate only along and outside the Xiticix's territorial borders, while CS



Commandos, Rangers, 'Borgs and other strike forces operate inside enemy territory disguised as nondescript mercenaries and adventurers.

The CS is stepping up their "Holding Operations" but this will only keep the aliens' growth rate at around the current 60%-70% annual population growth.

- **Plan C: Let's hope somebody else engages the Xiticix:** As crazy as it may sound, the Coalition States hopes some other outside forces will step forward and at least try to destroy the Xiticix. The theory is that whatever this second or third party might do, their efforts should weaken the Xiticix (as well as themselves) if not destroy them.

A best case scenario would be killing two birds with one stone: The Xiticix and those attacking them, presumably an enemy of the CS. On the other hand, even if such a faction(s) only weakened the Xiticix, it could give the CS the breathing room and edge it needs to recover from its current wars and/or soften up the enemy enough that the CS Military could swoop in and clean up. This is why the Coalition States has been so free with "leaking" the information they've gathered to the outside world. Unfortunately, many independent kingdoms believe this is some kind of trick or that the CS is wrong and that the Xiticix danger is minimal.

To this end, the Coalition States encourages and supports the many Psi-Stalker tribes living in and around the Hivelands in their continuing war against the Xiticix. It has been largely the efforts of the Psi-Stalkers and, to a lesser degree, the CS, that has kept the Xiticix population from increasing more than 60-70% annually. **Design Note:** The CS (nor has anyone else) has not figured out that the glowing fungus that covers the interior walls, ceilings and floors of the Hive Network is the Xiticix's primary and natural food source. However, even if they did, the fungus is highly resistant to poisons and radiation and it would take a decade or more (if ever), for them to come up with a means (biological agent, poison, etc.) to kill the fungus and cause the Xiticix to starve to death. Remember too, the Xiticix can eat other select foods and *might* be able to adapt, although it would chop their annual growth rate to a comparatively minuscule 10-20%.

Xiticix Killer

Reprinted from Rifts® Lone Star

The Xiticix Killer (pronounced "zeye-tick-icks killer") is the Coalition States' secret weapon against the Xiticix, and one of *Doctor Desmond Bradford's* greatest successes and a personal triumph. In 92 P.A., Emperor Prosek asked Doctor Bradford if he and his genetic engineers could create a predatory monster to combat the Xiticix hordes in the north. The Emperor explained that these tenacious and incomprehensible insect-like invaders were encroaching on human territories and represented a genuine threat to humankind. The Emperor's dilemma, however, was that he could not spare enough men or expensive Skelebots to launch a military attack against the Xiticix (at least not with other military targets and fronts brewing). Furthermore, estimates placed the Xiticix's population in the millions, which meant any assault against them would require at least a million troops and years of conflict (and a very real possibility the CS could lose). The esti-

mated cost in human and Dog Boy lives as well as CS resources was too high. Still, the Emperor wanted to launch some sort of offensive against the alien invaders, besides border patrols and the occasional surgical strike against insurgents who slipped into Wisconsin, Michigan and lower Minnesota. To this end, he thought a specially engineered *mutant* designed specifically to hunt and destroy Xiticix might be ideal.

The task was complicated by the fact that Emperor Prosek needed the creation to look "as alien as possible." This was important for a couple reasons:

One, the Xiticix were incredibly aggressive, so any assaults against them had to be limited to small, border hive colonies. To do otherwise would literally stir up a hornets nest. If the Xiticix felt threatened on a large scale, the several hive communities of a million plus could mobilize against the Coalition States and humans in general. However, if their attacker was something clearly *inhuman*, the insectoids could not make the connection to the Coalition States, and the CS people would be spared their wrath. Meanwhile, the CS could continue a covert campaign against the Xiticix.

Two, the Emperor did not want CS enemies to know they were engaged in any offensive against the Xiticix, and certainly didn't want the outside world to realize just how advanced the CS really was in the area of genetic engineering. Most CS enemies seemed to console themselves with the belief that the Dog Boys were the product of old, pre-Rifts technology and science beyond the Coalition's current level of understanding. That was good. Emperor Prosek liked being underestimated and didn't want to lose that edge.

The Ultimate Rat Catcher ... if your rat is a Xiticix, that is

Two dozen living and dead Xiticix were sent to the Lone Star Complex for extensive study; Doctor Bradford and his team needed to understand the insect-beings before they could devise an efficient killer. Bradford reasoned that they needed the equivalent of a rat catcher — that is to say, a large predator whose natural instinct was to hunt and prey upon Xiticix to the exclusion of all others. Inspired by the "rat" analogy, Bradford began to twist mutant cats. Of course, this was insufficient, especially in regards to making the Xiticix Killer look extremely alien. In a bold move, he instructed his team to genetically fuse several different animal species together while simultaneously "pooling" seemingly incongruous physical features. Although the look was coming together, the "predator" wasn't quite there. Something was missing.

Under most circumstances, their creation was likely to be outnumbered, so the Xiticix Killer had to be large, fast and strong in order to successfully battle the Xiticix and survive. It had to be a solitary hunter because the Xiticix could easily track and exterminate a pack of animals, and frequently overlooked lone animals. Ideally, the Killer needed the cunning, prowling and stalking abilities of a cat combined with a battery of weapons at its disposal — tooth and claw wouldn't be enough against the Xiticix.

The final combination of genetic features drew on every life form imaginable, from felines to predatory dinosaurs, but the final ingredient was something from another world. One of the dead Xiticix specimens came frozen in a block of ice. The

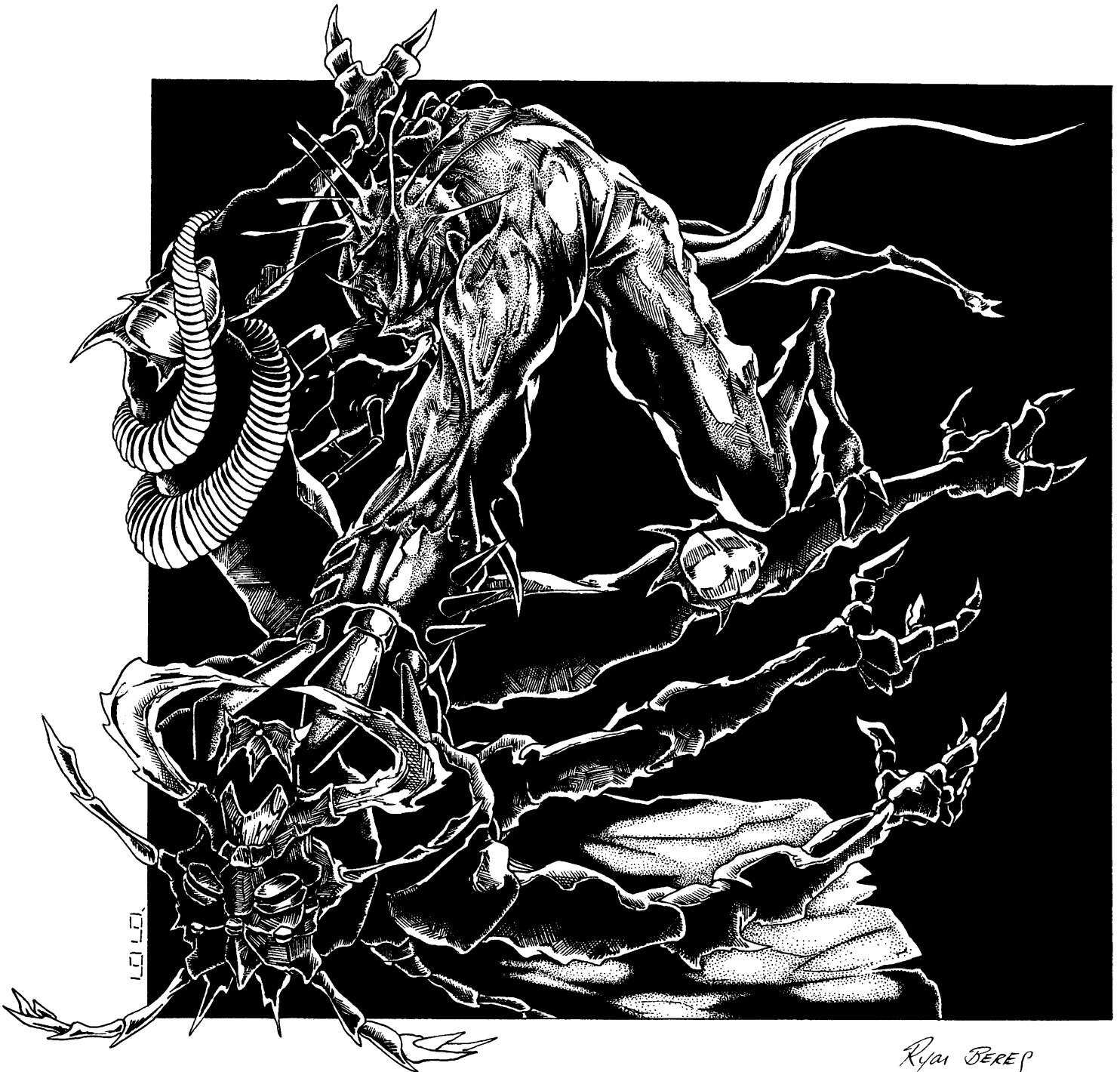
accompanying report noted that the body was recovered after a battle in which a hundred or so Xiticix appeared through a dimensional portal. When the corpse was defrosted at Lone Star, an alien organism was found literally attached to the Xiticix specimen. A quartet of large, muscular tentacles encircled the Xiticix's body, while a pair of smaller tentacles had pierced it. The autopsy revealed that the small tentacles had penetrated open wounds and had torn the innards of the man-sized insect to shreds. The Xiticix Warrior had probably died in less than a minute, although to look at his exoskeleton, the wounds appeared to be superficial. Doctor Bradford liked what he saw and incorporated it (without Emperor Prosek's knowledge) into his killing machine.

The end result of six years of intense research was nothing short of miraculous. The Xiticix Killer is a hulking beast with a

thick, Mega-Damage hide similar to dinosaurs. It has animal-like legs, but is bipedal and walks upright. Its two, large toes are prehensile and able to grasp the limbs of its prey as well as the limbs of trees and appendages jutting from Xiticix buildings. A long, powerful, prehensile tail provides additional balance, is used as a rudder when running or swimming, can curl around tree branches for additional support, and can lash out at enemies and pursuers like a whipping club.

The upper arms are similar in shape and function to a humanoid's, while the forearms are, as Doctor Bradford puts it, "unique."

The left arm is capped with a mechanical housing that ends in a three fingered claw. The fingers of the claw are large blades capable of cutting, clipping, stabbing and punching through the



Ryan BERES

Xiticix chitinous exoskeleton. Once the armor is punctured, a small, thin, prehensile tentacle can extend from the center of the blade-hand and lash out at an opponent. Although it can be used to ensnare a limb, strangle, or grab hold of a branch, it is typically used as a devastating offensive weapon. The small tentacle is plunged into open wounds and tears apart the Xiticix's innards from the inside out! Just as some have speculated, this appendage is a sort of second tongue that feeds on the internal organs as it shreds its opponents' insides (through absorption of the blood and gore). Against soft animals and humanoids who might corner the beast and engage it in battle, the small tentacle will lunge for the mouth (snaking down the throat and ripping up the esophagus, larynx and lungs), eyes, or ears — the attack is an instinctive one. However, the Xiticix Killer has no interest in other creatures and attacks non-Xiticix life forms only in self-defense, and then usually with escape, not murder, on its mind.

The right arm is always a long, thick, tentacle-like appendage but firm and powerful. The tentacle provides the Xiticix Killer with a reach equal to the length of its body. It is used as whipping weapon but can also jab, snare, entangle, and strangle. However, it is typically used to hold and entangle its prey while it attacks with its clawed hand, horns or even mouth to create one or more puncture wounds — holes in the Xiticix's natural, armored exoskeleton. The entangling ability combined with the strength of the limb and the upper arm enables the Killer to leap from treetops, rocks, rooftops and hiding places on a Xiticix Hive to ensnare a Xiticix while in mid-flight (the favored attack). Its powerful legs and two large, grasping prehensile toes can also be used to hold and entangle prey. Then while suspended in mid-air, and usually before the insectoid has a moment to react, it penetrates the natural body armor with its claw hand or rhino-like horns, plunges the small tentacle of the left hand into the (often small) entry wound, and tears apart the Xiticix's innards. This standard attack usually kills a Xiticix in 30 seconds (two melee rounds) or leaves the insectoid mortally wounded and incapable of retaliation (dies within 1D4 melee rounds). The attack is so swift and deadly that the insect-alien seldom has the opportunity to make more than one or two retaliatory strikes in its defense. The moment the Xiticix is dead, the Killer drops its prey and prepares to attack another or flee to fight another day. Unless seriously injured (down to 30% or less of its M.D.C.), the Xiticix Killer is eager to keep fighting. A CS Reconnaissance team caught a Xiticix Killer in action on film; the only such footage known to exist. It showed the monster slaying five Xiticix and injuring a sixth before three other warriors were finally able to kill it. The entire battle lasted 94 seconds (roughly six melee rounds).

Mounted near the elbow of the right arm is a bionic weapon that enables the Xiticix Killer to fire bolts of energy (1D4 M.D.) for short distances (about 100 feet/30.5 m)! These energy bolts are the equivalent of *psionic* energy blasts (probably a combination of electromagnetic energy and ambient P.P.E.) focused and directed through the bionic attachment.

The brain is encased in a thick skull, covered in a tough, flabby hide. Atop the head is a crest or crown of long spiked quills which the creature can raise and lower with a thought. The quills can also be fired one or two at a time (2D6 S.D.C. damage per quill). A raised crown of quills means the Xiticix Killer is frightened or angry and ready to battle. Lowered quills indicates a submissive or relaxed state of mind. Located between the eyes,

where the nose should be, are a pair of rhino-like horns used to jab and puncture Xiticix body armor.

Although reputed to stand 15 to 20 feet (4.6 to 6.1 m) tall, the Xiticix Killer stands 12 to 14 feet tall (3.6 to 4.2 m) fully erect, but usually stalks and runs in a hunched position, low to the ground. Like a cat, it has great balance and agility, and it can leap 25 feet (7.6 m) high or 50 feet (15.2 m) across from a standing still position; increase by 50% with a running start. Also like a cat, it exhibits incredible patience, waiting for just the right moment to strike. It has incredible endurance and can run at top speed for an hour before it begins to tire (reduce speed by 30% for the next hour).

The creature is hairless. In the winter, its skin is a snow white color with some light gray or blue-grey tones and highlights. In the summer, the skin changes color to a light grey with white and grayish green highlights. Its tracks are easily recognizable because of the two large toes, but the animal leaps from the ground to trees, to ground, back into trees, and into streams or upon rocks, so it is often impossible to track for more than a few hundred yards.

The Xiticix Killer is equally quick and adept in the trees as it is on the ground. In the trees, it seems to swing and leap from one to another like a giant, grayish-white grasshopper. It can also scale the concrete-like resin Hives, pillars, struts and bridges of the Xiticix's dwellings with equal ease. It is interesting to note that the Killer's hide is roughly the same grayish white color as the exterior of the Xiticix hives and a Killer crouching in a crease, crevice or on a rooftop is difficult to see. The Killer is so bold that it will actually go inside and raid the hive, and sometimes packs of 6-16 will come together and slaughter scores of the humanoid insects.

To prevent the Xiticix Killer from ever being a threat to humankind, the creature is genetically designed to hunt and feed *only* on Xiticix! This means if the Xiticix are ever completely destroyed or chased back to their home dimension, the Xiticix Killer will die from starvation — no Xiticix, no food.

Over the last seven years, approximately, 29,820 Xiticix Killers have been created in the laboratory and secretly released into Xiticix territory. Although the animals can bear offspring, they are so driven to hunt and battle Xiticix that half of the Killers are slain before they ever do. Consequently, it is an ever dwindling population despite the fact that an estimated 4,500 freeborns have joined the lab clones. Of the original 29,820 released into the wild, only 7,200 are believed to stalk the Canadian woodlands of Manitoba, with another 5,000-6,000 in Minnesota and a few hundred scattered elsewhere.

In an effort to bolster the Xiticix Killers numbers, Bradford has created an additional 2,000 to be released in the Hivelands in the beginning of the summer in 105 P.A., along with 1000 other mutants, mainly failures and mistakes. These "rejects" include several dozen Kill Hounds and Kill Cats too aggressive to control, and a dozen Ursa-Warriors, among others. See **Rifts® Lone Star** for details regarding Dog Boys and other CS mutants.

Xiticix Killer

Top Secret GED Hunter-Killer of Xiticix.

Alignment: Animal, effectively Anarchist by human perception, probably seen as evil by the Xiticix upon whom it preys.

Average Attribute Range: I.Q. 2D4+3 (high animal intelligence), M.E. 2D6+4, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 3D6+14, P.P. 3D6+10, P.E.

3D6+6, P.B. 2D6, Spd 6D6+12 on the ground or climbing. P.S. and P.E. are *supernatural* so the beast inflicts Mega-Damage from its punches and other attacks.

Hit Points & S.D.C.: Not applicable; a mega-damage being.

M.D.C.: P.E. attribute number x3 +1D6x10.

Average Weight: 400 pounds (180 kg) of muscle and rage.

Average Height: 14 feet (4.3 m).

Human Speech: Animal hisses, growls, grunts and roars.

Average Life Span: Estimates indicate it should live to be 50, but its violent lifestyle gives the average creature a life span of 2-8 years.

Natural Abilities & Bonuses: A creature of instinct. Bonuses are in addition to attribute bonuses.

Acrobatics 80% on all abilities that come with this skill.

Climb 95%/90%

Swim 65% (Xiticix can't swim)

Hold breath underwater for 1D4+2 minutes.

Prowl 60% +2% per level of experience.

Good sense of hearing

Hawk-like vision (can see Xiticix flying two miles (3.2 km) away.

Identify scents: 46% +2% per level of experience (+30% to recognize Xiticix scent).

Track Xiticix by scent: 70% +2% per level of experience.

Other scents at half.

Leap 25 feet (7.6 m) high or 50 feet (15.2 m) across from a standing still position; increase by 50% with a running start.

An incredibly patient hunter.

Prehensile tail

Double-jointed

Ambidextrous

Seven attacks per melee per round!

+4 on initiative.

+3 to strike and parry.

+4 to dodge

+3 to roll with fall or impact.

+3 to save vs poison and disease.

+10 to save vs Horror Factor.

Never uses weapons, other than the bionic ones built in.

Special: Resistant to Magic Energy: Magic energy (fire ball, lightning, etc.) attacks do half damage, but other types of magic have full effect. In addition, these strange creatures are totally unaffected by Ley Line Storms.

Special: Heals quickly: Recovers 2D6 M.D.C. points per day.

Special: Bio-Regeneration: Regrows tentacles, tail, tongue and quills quickly, but not legs or upper arms. It takes about 2D4+10 days to regrow them completely.

Types of Attacks & Damage:

- **Head Quills:** 2D6 S.D.C./H.P. damage per quill. Range: 30 feet (9 m).
- **Head Horns:** 2D4 M.D. per head butt. A roll of 5 or higher means a penetrating blow that will poke a small hole in a Xiticix exoskeleton or artificial body armor. The wound itself is minor and comparatively insignificant, but opens an opportunity for the small tearing tentacle to penetrate the armor and tear at the body from the inside, destroying internal organs and causing massive hemorrhaging.
- **Mouth & Fangs:** 2D6 S.D.C./H.P. damage from a restrained attack, 6D6 S.D.C. damage on a normal full strength attack or 1D4 M.D. on a power bite attack!

- **Left Arm Claw Hand:** Claw: 3D6 M.D. +P.S. damage from a slash or stabbing attack. Double damage from a power punch, or 1D6 M.D. from a clubbing, blunt attack. In the former two *penetrating* attacks, if the damage is 12 or higher, it means the attack poked a hole in the Xiticix's exoskeleton or artificial body armor. The wound itself might be relatively minor, but creates an opening for the small tearing tentacle to penetrate the armor and rip apart its opponent from the inside, destroying internal organs and causing massive hemorrhaging. **Note:** Consequently, most attacks with the left arm are directed at the belly or throat of its opponent.

- **Left Arm Tentacle:** The tentacle does 1D4 M.D. from external attacks but 6D6 M.D. from slashing and tearing attacks to the insides of its victim as it thrashes around wildly. The agony and horror of this attack cause the victim to lose initiative (if he had it) and half his normal melee attacks per round! **Note:** Once inside its prey, the tentacle has three independent attacks per melee round. These attacks cannot be avoided or prevented unless the tentacle is physically pulled out of the body, which causes 6D6 damage, or chopped off. However, chopping the tentacle from the hand of the Xiticix Killer is difficult because it is protected by the metal claw (requires a called shot of 19 without modifiers or a natural 20). The tentacle has 10 M.D.C. Note that the portion left inside the victim will continue to thrash for one more attack doing 4D6 M.D. damage and internal injury is likely to be mortal — the only hope for survival being immediate medical attention and either magical restoration (healing touch is insufficient) or extreme bionic reconstruction or full conversion.

- **Right Arm Tentacle:** Supernatural P.S. damage. Reach: 16 feet (4.9 m)

- **Right Arm Energy Attacks:** 1D4 M.D. per blast, rate of fire: two per melee round (each counts as one melee attack), range: 100 feet (30.5 m), payload: a maximum of eight blasts per 20 minutes.

- **Tail:** Supernatural P.S. damage. Reach: 16 feet (4.9 m).

- **Kick Attacks:** Supernatural P.S. damage.

Magic: None.

Average P.P.E.: 6D6

Psionics: None

R.C.C. Skills: Also see Natural Abilities, above.

Detect Ambush (+5%)

Detect Concealment (+5%)

Land Navigation (+15%)

Wilderness Survival (+20%)

R.C.C. Related Skills: None, an instinctive hunter.

Secondary Skills: If exposed to the player characters a Xiticix Killer can learn four Secondary Skills from the list below, plus two additional per every other level exposed to them. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level and get no bonuses. Only the available skill categories are listed.

Domestic: Any

Espionage: Tracking only.

Military: Camouflage only.

Physical: Running, Wrestling only.

Technical: Can learn to understand (not speak) any Language or learn basic Lores.

Wilderness: Identify Plants and Track Animals only.

Standard Equipment: None, other than the two bionic limbs.

Money: None.

Cybernetics: Two, see previous descriptions.

Identification Coding (I.C.): None. Officially the Lone Star Complex doesn't know anything about this "alien creature" and emphatically denies any claims to the contrary. Most people believe the Xiticix Killer is a B-Bee.

Note: Xiticix Killers bear 1D4 offspring, which reach physical maturity within 10 months and sexual maturity within 16 months. The young have roughly half the M.D.C., attacks, bonuses and skill level of the adults, and do not have the artificial appendages or energy weapons.

Lazlo's War

The powers that be at Lazlo have come to conclusions similar to the Coalition States, right down to eliminating the threat via genocide. The renowned theologian, leader and dragon, *Plato*, recently issued the following decree (reprinted from *Rifts@Canada* for the reader's convenience).

"I have the utmost respect for my psychic colleagues, but prognostication is far from being an exact art. The future is ever in motion, constantly changing. Perhaps they were wrong about the creatures called The Mechanoids. Perhaps they were not. Personally, I believe the Mechanoids were indeed the first Great Danger. And I, personally, am not convinced that danger has passed. Be that as it may, the Xiticix threat to life as we know it is genuine. People forget that the early sages warned of *seven* — not four Great Dangers. Somehow this has been forgotten or misinterpreted. So the world awaits the final two, assuming the first two, The Mechanoids and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse have been thwarted, and dismiss the other three Dangers out of hand. I know all our hearts are in agreement when I say, I hope the first two Dangers have been averted. But there are as total of seven. The faces of the other dangers remain lost in the motions of the future, but whether the Xiticix are one of them, or not, they *are* a danger not to be taken lightly.

"We, of the Council of Learning, and all of us at Lazlo cherish and revere life in all its myriad forms. To us, there is nothing more abhorrent than to advocate genocide against any one people. And yet ... and yet, with the Xiticix we see no other way. We have tried every known means of communication with these ... fellow life forms, but they refuse to answer us. It is possible they are so alien that the boundaries of communication can not be bridged. I do not know. We continue to try, but do so with little hope for success. The Xiticix may be so insect-like that we are beyond their comprehension as anything other than a rival life form competing for the same world. A world they mean to conquer. And conquer they have. Methodically and ruthlessly they spread across the land and make it theirs. They kill any being who represents the slightest danger, and not only do they attack all who enter their domain, but as they expand their borders into new lands, they eliminate all in their path. They are like angry locust whose hunger can not be satisfied.

"Still, it is with a heavy heart that I proclaim the Xiticix a plague upon this land. A cancer that must be cut out and destroyed, before it can devour our world. I shudder to think how much these words sound like those spoken by Emperor Prosek against us. But we do not suggest slaughtering those who are dif-

ferent from ourselves only because they are different. We must stand against a ravaging beast at our door.

"This, my friends and colleagues, is *our* war. For none, other than the Coalition States, seem to realize the danger, or if they do, they lack the power to do anything about it. We do not. We are strong. Who else if not us? And so it is by the ironic hand of fate that our very love of life compels us to go war and take life. I am as numb by this paradoxical revelation as you must be, and I have had the luxury of pondering it for many months now. It is time for us to take a stand protect the innocent, and stop the *Devouring Swarm*.

"As we look toward the sad days before us, I can not help but think — all the more pity the conflict between Tolkeen and the Coalition States is taking place. For together we are almost assured a victory against a true common enemy. Regrettably, these parties see things otherwise. They are committed to self-immolation in a war of pride and hate. The powers at Tolkeen respond to us only with chastisement for not joining their fool's battle against the Coalition. We have even shared our concerns with Chi-Town and Iron Heart. We know they see the danger, but they refuse to respond. In their eyes, we are as much evil monsters as the Xiticix. Lord Coake of the noble Cyber-Knights says he will do what he can to help us, but with his fabled legion is splintered, with scores joining the side of Tolkeen, much of his remaining heroes are dispatched to contain the dark forces at Calgary and the creeping darkness in Mexico. He fears there is little he can do. And so we stand alone before the *Devouring Swarm*.

"The two Councils are considering strategies and tactics even as I speak. They should have a plan of action ready for implementation within two months, for we must move swiftly. I can tell you that we plan to take the war to them rather than bringing the Xiticix sweeping down upon our great city and our friends around us. We welcome all suggestions."

Plato's address to the people of Lazlo
— Summer, 105 P.A.

According to the Council of Learning at Lazlo, their scholars, psychics and mages now believe the "Devouring Swarm" foreseen by so many oracles and psychics was not the Mechanoids, but the Xiticix. Now that the Mechanoid threat *seems* to have gone, they recognize it is the bug men who threaten life in North America, if not the world.



Like the Coalition States, the leaders at Lazlo have come to the horrifying conclusion that the Xiticix must be eliminated. Such an agenda is abhorrent to most people at Lazlo and has been the subject of intense debate. The people are divided, with 60% in favor of what they perceive as necessary and quick, deadly action, while 40% arguing for further study and exploration of alternative methods of eliminating the danger, ideally without (or with minimal) bloodshed. Many of those against “war” insist that the data acquired from the CS is untrustworthy, unreliable and part of a plot to destroy them all. They believe Lazlo’s going to war against that Xiticix is exactly what the Coalition wants. That the CS is deliberately instigating for war, so that should the people of Lazlo prove victorious, the CS War Machine can ride roughshod over their weakened defenses and destroy them.

Plato and the other learned leaders of Lazlo concur that this could be a CS plot, but that it does not change the facts. The Council of Learning’s own research on the Xiticix has confirmed most of the Coalition’s data, although they estimate the current alien population at 1.6 to perhaps as many as two million, not the higher numbers suggested by the CS. They have also confirmed that the Xiticix population is, indeed, increasing at 60-70% a year and that within a very short time (especially by the standards used by dragons and other creatures of magic) the Xiticix will be too numerous to stop. Lazlo’s leaders believe their window of opportunity is right now. That to wait even a year is too long and increases the size of the enemy, makes the conflict more difficult and increases the potential number of likely casualties.

Lazlo’s Plan A: Queen Check (containment and slow genocide): This plan involves targeting the Queens and destroying them. This task is more easily accomplished by practitioners of magic, Master Psychics and nonhumans such as dragons, Elementals and such. Still it is extremely dangerous and difficult. There will certainly be loss of life on the part of the Lazlo troops, and there are some serious risks even if the plan is successful.

The concept is to neutralize the Queens. Without their Queens, the Xiticix can not reproduce, effectively halting their expansion and containing them within their current region. As the creatures reach their natural life span, they will begin to die off and eventually vanish from the Earth completely. This plan is regarded as the most humane.

Problems and Risks of Plan A: First, *all* Queens must be located and terminated. Ideally this should be done as quickly and coordinated as possible to prevent the Xiticix from taking countermeasures and/or successfully hiding and protecting a number of Queens. In other words, striking before they know what hit them.

To play it safe, all eggs and larvae should also be destroyed so no new Queen is born. Theoretically, magical forms of detection (including the use of Elementals), transportation (magical flight, climbing, teleportation, Mystic Portal, etc.), concealment (Shadow Meld, invisibility, metamorphosis, shrunken size, Temporal Magic, etc.), defenses (magically generated walls, armor, fog, fire, etc.) and combat (magical energy blasts, Techno-Wizard devices, etc.) should give soldiers from Lazlo a tremendous advantage. They can strike without warning and literally “pop” in and out, minimizing casualties to an estimated 15-20% (compared to the CS estimates of 40-60%). The use of magic will also play a critical role in finding the Queens and making surgical strikes with precision.



Another risk is how the Xiticix survivors will respond? The people of Lazlo must be prepared for all out war. The problem is nobody knows how the hive will respond to the loss of all its leaders. Without a single Queen to lead them, Xiticix society *may* crumble and fall into anarchy, but what exactly does that mean? Will they fight among themselves? Will they scatter to the wind, and in so doing, plague humanoid wherever they are encountered? Or will the Xiticix (all of them) fly into a killing frenzy and swarm across the land as a massive obliterating army like locusts destroying everything in their path? For that matter, they might turn on each other or commit mass suicide. They normally stay within or close to the Hive Network, but without their Queens they can not propagate, and therefore have no purpose. Without that there may be no reason to stay at the hive (unless instinct dictates otherwise). The bottom line is nobody knows how the Xiticix will respond to this hypothetical situation. A few military leaders have suggested it may be prudent to exterminate 30-50% of the remaining population, particularly Warriors and Hunters, just to play it safe.

Third, assuming the Xiticix remain in the Hive Networks, teams of monitors will have to brave the inner sanctums of the angry Hive Colonies to perform reconnaissance and make certain no new Queen(s) have somehow appeared. If one does surface, she must be neutralized before the cycle of life can be renewed.

Plan B: Operation Scorched Earth (total genocide). Simply put, take no chances, destroy them all. Like Plan A, the Queens will be targeted first, killing all but 1-3 of them. A few Queens will be left alive to prevent the Xiticix from leaving the Hive Complex; they will instinctively stay to protect their Queens who represent the life and survival of their species, effectively containing the enemy. Unfortunately, this requires a much larger military operation and gives the Xiticix a bit of an advantage, because they are organized and experienced defenders inside their bunker-like towers and underground tunnels. Estimated casualties for Lazlo troops is 30-45%.

Besides the obvious problems of waging a sustained siege and fighting for one's life, is the question of whether or not a band of Xiticix might try to escape with a Queen in tow, and relocate. It is speculated that the original Xiticix who spawned this current nest of 1.6 million or more started with as few as a single Queen and a couple dozen lesser Xiticix.

The opposing train of thought at Lazlo

Those opposed to war have suggested waiting 2-3 years, during which time they will intensely study the Xiticix, try to establish meaningful communication with them and, most importantly, devise an alternative means of ridding the world of them. The most popular idea is to open up a dimensional Rift and send them back to either their homeworld, or an uninhabitable one capable of supporting life. While this may seem like the perfect solution on the surface, it is fraught with problems — probably insurmountable ones.

First, nobody knows the location of the Xiticix homeworld. Their appearance on Riffs Earth is the first time these aliens have ever been encountered. Finding it is next to impossible, even for Temporal Raiders, True Atlanteans and the Splugorth.

Second, since humans can not communicate with the Xiticix, how does one convince them to go anywhere?

Third, these Earth Xiticix may not want to return home. Or they may be regarded as rivals or enemies to those they left back home (some scientists have speculated that after a certain point, the Xiticix people divide into separate hive units or communities and probably war amongst themselves; although nobody knows). Likewise, if they are content on Earth, how can they be convinced or forced to leave to inhabit some unknown world? And aren't the wizards condemning that world, even if it does not yet have intelligent life?

The answer to getting the Xiticix to leave is also rooted in magic. The plan is to create a huge dimensional vortex that will scoop up the entire Hive Network and dimensionally teleport it to a new world. However, the last time anybody is known to have tried that on Earth, the continent of Atlantis vanished! Moreover, such abilities are even beyond the Splugorth and ancient gods. The few examples of such a (natural?) phenomenon including Fadetowns, shifting lands, and the Yucatan Peninsula seem to exchange or bond one physical area of land with another in a different dimension, with other negative effects such as a seemingly permanent link or connection to that other dimension. Assuming such new and potent magic could be developed, it would probably take a dragon's lifetime (i.e. thousands of years) to develop it.

Another solution that has been offered is to capture all the Xiticix Queens, open a dimensional portal and make certain that the Xiticix minions know or see it happen so, as the theory goes, they will follow their Queens through the portal where they can be trapped in the other dimension. Again, an unlikely solution. First an appropriate world would have to be discovered. Second, it would be difficult to open a portal large enough or long enough to accommodate a million or more Xiticix (it could take days, even weeks to mobilize all of them), and three, there is no guarantee that all of the aliens would leave the Earth. What about stragglers, newborns and eggs? What if the Hive splits, sending half to the new world and leaving half on Earth? An entire planet would have been sacrificed and the inevitable showdown between Earthlings and Xiticix would only be delayed.

As positive as such solutions may sound, they are not feasible. Still, those opposed to taking life argue for some sort of "dimensional relocation" program rather than genocide. However, the authorities at Lazlo prepare to launch "Plan A" within the next 1D4 months.

Possible Allies in Lazlo's War

Possible allies who may be willing to support the efforts of Lazlo to contain, remove or eradicate the Xiticix from the face of the planet include many independent creatures of magic and sorcerers, individuals and groups of Native Americans, Cyber-Knights (although they are splintered and too scattered to offer much assistance), the Tundra Rangers, and bands of adventurers as well as many communities who feel threatened by the encroaching Xiticix or are usually supportive of Lazlo, such as New Lazlo, Perez and the Cartier-Fury Ranch.

Northern Gun and the Manistique Imperium would almost certainly offer support in the way of weapons and equipment at a discount (20-30% off), probably on the sly or through third parties. They aren't supposed to sell goods to the enemies of the Coalition States, which *Lazlo* and *New Lazlo* most definitely are. However, the CS so fears the Xiticix that they will seriously con-



sider “unofficially” encouraging such action, if they believe the forces from Lazlo are serious about exterminating the Xiticix. Moreover, CS forces in the region (numerous because of their own efforts against the Xiticix) will take no action against the Army of Lazlo even if it should become exposed and vulnerable. After all, the obliteration of the Xiticix is good for the Coalition States and the preservation of North America from invading aliens is the lesser of two evils. Besides, Emperor Prosek secretly harbors a grudging respect for the leaders of Lazlo, while his son, Joseph Prosek II, recognizes and accepts the strategic advantages of having Lazlo destroy the insect aliens for them.

The downside from the two Proseks’ point of view, is that triumph, while good for the CS and everybody concerned, will make Lazlo a much more widely recognized and respected “power.” A free nation whose triumph against the Xiticix will attract many more D-Bees, dragons, psychics and practitioners of magic to their realm. A most unpleasant potential turn of events, indeed. Still, it is a small price to pay for the elimination of the Xiticix. Besides, Joseph Prosek II is already toying with ways to inflame a rivalry between Lazlo and the hated Federation of Magic.

The Coalition States. As noted elsewhere, the CS is likely to stay out of the combatants’ way — neither directly helping nor hindering the Lazlo forces or any people who battle the Xiticix. After the war is over, and assuming Lazlo wins, the CS will watch and let their troops withdraw from the region without incident. The CS will probably be weak from their own wars in the northwest and with Free Quebec and can ill afford another major conflict. However, once the majority (70%) of the Lazlo forces have left, the CS will begin their own in depth investigation and “mop-up” operations to make certain the Hivelands are cleaned out of Xiticix. Any alien insects discovered will be destroyed with prejudice. Furthermore, the CS will launch a campaign to destroy the Hive Networks in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and perhaps parts of Manitoba, southwestern Ontario and Michigan as well. Any “enemies of the States” — i.e. D-Bees, practitioners of magic, their supporters, monsters and anybody who challenges the CS will be attacked and terminated whenever feasible.

Free Quebec and other human supremacists will *not* join forces with Lazlo for any reason, not even to destroy a common enemy. If Lazlo is triumphant it is likely to attract more monsters, D-Bees and magic-using riffraff to their kingdom. Free Quebec will not be happy about this nation of magic growing just outside their back yard. These human supremacists hate the fact that the Kingdom of Lazlo is a growing power in Canada.

The authorities at Free Quebec will be disgusted and disappointed to learn that the Coalition States may have supported Lazlo in the smallest of ways, even if it was just turning a blind eye to their war and failing to strike against them when their defenses were exposed to CS attack. Yet another wedge between the CS and its former State, Free Quebec.

The Splugorth and/or their Minions *may* offer some assistance, but it is likely to be unexpected and violent, or more likely, quiet and in secret. Acting behind the scenes would probably entail sending in special operatives and mages *disguised* as independent adventurers, explorers, and dimensional travelers who want to lend their support to a good cause. Splynncryth might also supply (for a price) a small selection of powerful magic weapons and equipment and/or tech items to help those battling the insect aliens.

Lord Splynncryth and other Splugorth of Atlantis are not likely to take a direct hand, nor send in massive troops — although they could. Such an intervention and frightening show of force (the Splugorth could marshal troops numbering into the tens of millions and obliterate the Xiticix in a matter of weeks if they really wanted to) would freak out the Coalition States, and shock and alarm everybody (including gods and other Alien Intelligences). Even a small army of the Minions of Splugorth, say 100,000 strong, would unnerve people and might wrongly convince outsiders that the Kingdom of Lazlo has struck some kind of alliance with the Splugorth of Atlantis. A belief that could have serious repercussions.

The Cyber-Knights, divided by the war at Tolkeen and other events, will only have a few dozen who are able to join the Kingdom of Lazlo’s battle against the Xiticix.

The Tundra Rangers will send six companies (960 Rangers in all) to join the Lazlo forces to destroy the Xiticix. Another three companies are operating in northern Manitoba to help keep the peace and defend the innocent. The remaining Rangers can be found in the Canadian northwest and throughout the tundra, carrying on their usual work as defenders of the weak and innocent. See **Rifts® Canada** for details.

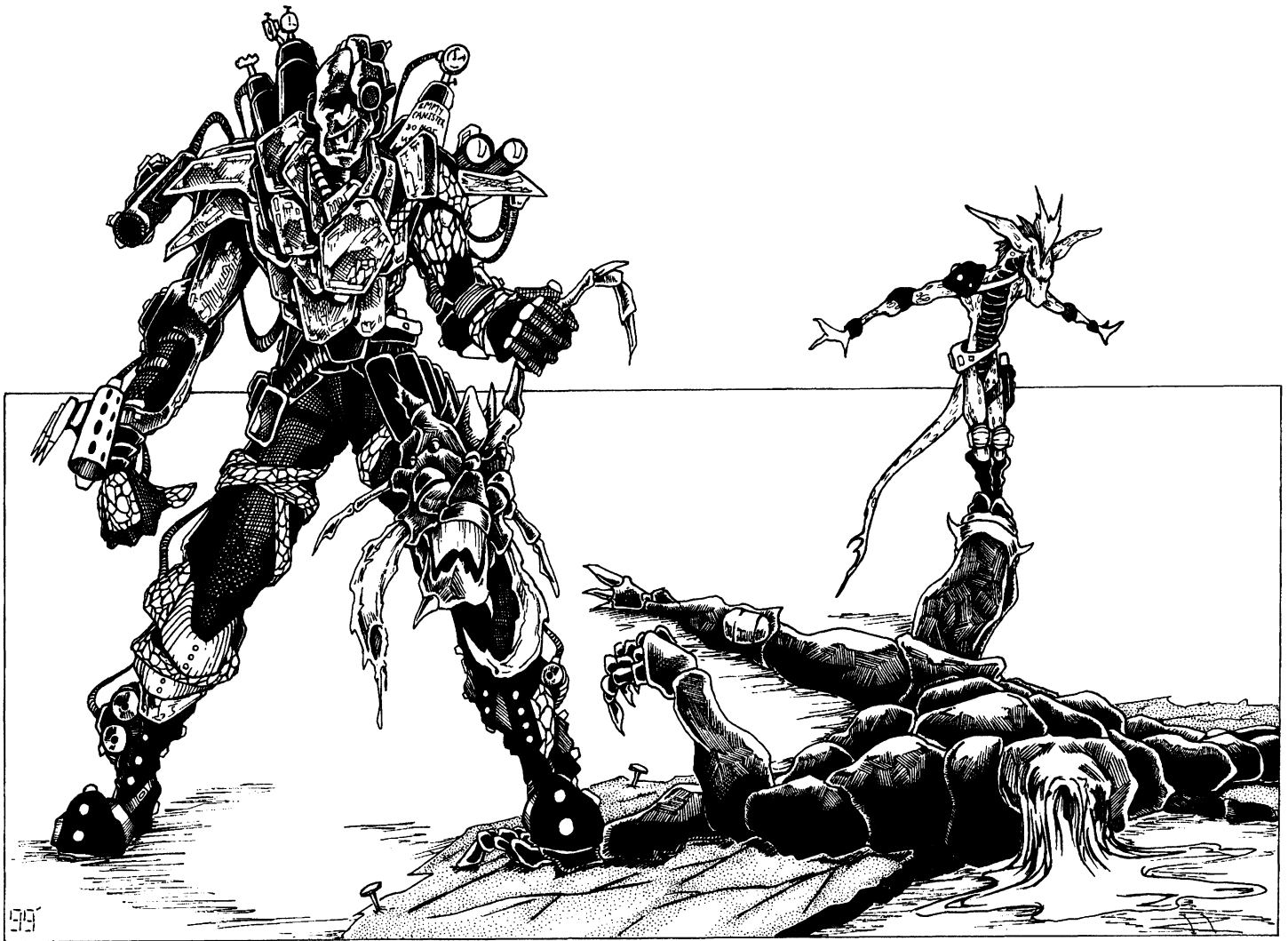
D-Bees and independent adventurers will also join the cause, however, many of the best warriors, mercenaries, mages and adventurers are committed to other conflicts, most notably the wars at Free Quebec and Tolkeen. These two major wars are draining manpower and resources throughout North America. **G.M. Note:** With high-powered, experienced fighters and adventurers drawn to Tolkeen and Free Quebec, low level (new and start-up) characters have an unprecedented opportunity to get hired for, or volunteer and make a name for themselves in, the Xiticix War. Desperate for help, the Lazlo forces will not turn away any able body.

Wild Psi-Stalkers are the only significant force the Lazlo troops can count on in their war against the Xiticix. These mutant humans have been fighting the Xiticix for decades and regard them as their mortal enemies. However, the many tribes and clans are divided and fight as small bands ranging from a dozen to three thousand, and not an army composed of tens of thousands (which would be ideal). Rivalry and one-upmanship between these competing clans is high and makes cooperation, discipline and order nearly impossible. It is unlikely that the Lazlo leaders can unify them into the massive fighting force that could win them the war. Still, as scattered and uncooperative as they may be (with outsiders as well as rival Psi-Stalkers), there are at least 100,000 to 150,000 Psi-Stalker warriors at their disposal! The trick is getting them all on board and working together at least to some degree.

Consequences and Issues of Concern

Actually, there are many concerns regarding the massive changes that will take place in the regional ecology once the Xiticix are removed from it. The war with the Xiticix and their extermination will have a tremendous impact on the regions once known as Manitoba, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

1. Success will come at a great loss of life. An estimated 25-40% of the Wild Psi-Stalker population will perish in the Xiticix War (at least 50,000-90,000 and probably twice that number). Likewise, a 20-30% mortality rate is likely among the Lazlo troops and their other allies.



2. Will Psi-Stalkers become a problem? Who will Wild Psi-Stalkers prey upon when the Xiticix are gone? Will they focus on the Simvan or other D-Bees? Target demons and other supernatural evil beings common in the Canadian wilderness? Or will they trouble humans and civilized communities?

3. With the Psi-Stalker population diminished, **Simvan Monster Riders** may see this as an opportunity to both expand eastward and extract revenge on their long-time rivals, the Psi-Stalkers. Thankfully, such acts of revenge and aggression will not be motivated by thoughts of genocide, but to prove who is the dominant and superior tribal power. This will mean increased, unprovoked Simvan raids on Psi-Stalker clans, tribes and communities, as well as expansion into other lands. Over the years that follow, thousands of Psi-Stalkers and Simvan will die from these conflicts, but most skirmishes will be small, brief attacks rather than prolonged, large scale engagements. Bands of 1D6x10 to 2D4x100 Simvan will raid, attack and threaten Psi-Stalker bands of similar size (up to 20% larger). In turn, this will incite the Psi-Stalkers to retaliate as both races seek revenge, struggle to prove who is superior, and lay claim to hunting grounds.

4. The Xiticix have served as a sort of **barrier** keeping refugees, demons, monsters and even wildlife in the Canadian southwest, north and American West out of the area or from heading east. With the Xiticix danger gone, the region they once inhabited will be comparatively free of hostile forces and open to

travel, expansion and settlement by any number of people and creatures.

5. The war with the Xiticix will contribute to stretching the resources of the **Cyber-Knights** to the breaking point. Some scholars and observers fear the fabled Cyber-Knights may be heading for extinction. The Siege on Tolkeen has divided the Knights, with roughly half joining the Kingdom of Tolkeen to battle the Coalition States. Outsiders see this as a dire move for three reasons: One, those fighting at Tolkeen are likely to perish. Two, this is the first time the Cyber-Knights, as a group, have opposed the Coalition States. Three, it is the first time in their history that the Knights have been divided over any issue: Lord Coake has issued a decree that no Cyber-Knights are to join the Tolkeen conflict. The hundreds who have, do so in direct defiance of their revered leader, suggesting to some that the order is crumbling.

To complicate matters, the Cyber-Knights who have joined Tolkeen will, for the first time ever, directly confront the Coalition States as a recognized "group." This will automatically place *all* Cyber-Knights on the Coalition's Enemy List. Prior to this, the Cyber-Knights, as a group, were not seen as a political or military enemy, mainly because most of them operated in the wilderness of the New West, and the CS never realized how revered and influential these "heroes" were among the people. It has not gone unnoticed by the CS that the presence of the Cyber-Knights has rallied thousands of other people who were undecid-

ed as to what to do, to join the Kingdom of Tolkeen and dare to defy the Coalition States. Any group or individual (like Erin Tarn) who can inspire and motivate hundreds or thousands of people is seen as a danger, especially if those “people” are not human. Moreover, the Cyber-Knights will ultimately be responsible for many successful military operations against the CS Military War Machine. The Cyber-Knights and practitioners of magic will also claim the most CS lives. None of which will ever be forgotten or forgiven.

The Cyber-Knights who remain out of the Tolkeen Conflict are left to deal with the dangers from the *Vampire Kingdoms of Mexico* (ever encroaching into the southern portion of the old American Empire), the *Xiticix conflict* (which they want to support and send what few Knights and trusted adventurers they can spare), and the dangers of *the Calgary Rift* and the kingdom of monsters said to be developing at its threshold. This is to say nothing about their work as peacekeepers in the *New West* and heroic efforts across the face of North America. Being spread so thin makes the Cyber-Knights vulnerable to their enemies — which are many. Over the next two years, the Cyber-Knights that will perish in the current military conflicts alone will likely reduce their numbers by 40-60%! Meanwhile, those in the field must face the wrath of vengeful demons, monsters and lowlifes who may see this as a good opportunity to extract their revenge without fear of reprisal from fellow Knights or heroes. Only time will tell what fate awaits the Cyber-Knights (see the **Siege on Tolkeen™ series** for more details).

6. What should be done with the Hive Networks that are left standing? Destroying them, especially the subterranean tunnel networks, will be difficult work even using high-technology or powerful magic (i.e. using Elementals and similar forces to destroy them). Undoubtedly, the Psi-Stalkers will claim some of these places, but what about other races? The vast city-like towers and structures are almost certain to attract human and D-Bee refugees who can move into the Mega-Damage structures and modify them into sturdy M.D.C. dwellings — ready made cities waiting to be inhabited.

This is not as good as it may sound. Nobody knows who or what might move in. Monsters and demons will find abandoned Xiticix dwellings even more appealing than humans and D-Bees. Gargoyles, for example, would find the towers delightful places to live. Even under the best of conditions, there are likely to be battles for control over various sections and parts of these alien cities by rival groups.

The Coalition States will regard the vacated Hive Networks as a strategic nightmare. The CS will not want alien “housing” just left sitting open and available to nonhuman squatters. Opposed to all things “alien,” the CS will not consider using the Xiticix dwellings in any capacity themselves — except, perhaps, as a trap to lure and destroy nonhuman life forms.

The CS already has military forts, outposts and personnel in the area, so it would be easy for them to select certain Xiticix Hive Networks (or an entire hive) and turn them into giant “Roach Motels.” A way to lure “dangerous alien invaders and enemies of the States” into its seemingly safe confines. Once a desired “monster or enemy” was inside the trap habitat, or it was sufficiently “filled,” the CS could spring the trap.

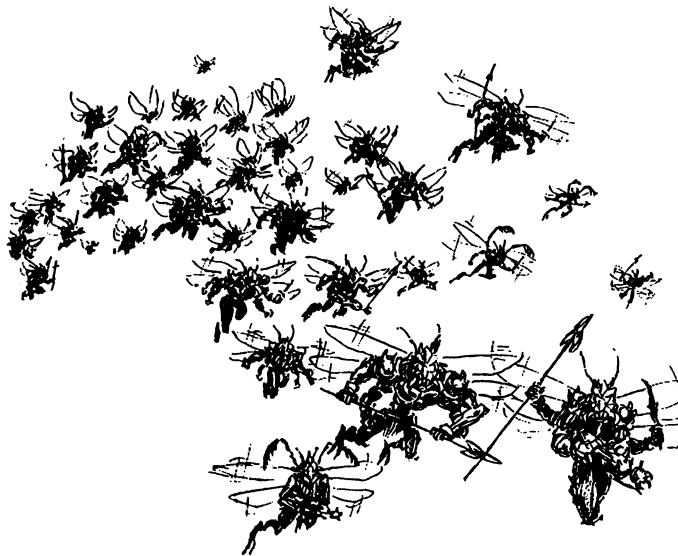
Depending on how elaborate the CS decides to go, they could build tiny, concealed sensors, cameras, and monitors into the very walls of the structures to observe and spy upon the inhabitants’

every move, as well as the means of delivering poisonous gases, biological agents (disease) and other indirect means of killing the majority of the inhabitants. After the majority are slain or incapacitated, CS troops could raid the habitat, kill all survivors, haul away the dead (and conceal the most obvious signs of combat) and wait for the next unsuspecting batch of D-Bee refugees, bandits, demons or monsters. Since the CS troops will have sensors in the complex to aid them in locating and tracking the movement of the inhabitants, as well as maps and first-hand knowledge of the “trap habitat,” there will be no place for the inhabitants to hide.

Elaborate “trap habitats” might include concealed sliding panels, walls and doors to block exits and prevent those inside from easily escaping. (“Where did this wall come from?” “I could have sworn there was an exit here.”) Moreover, a “trap habitat” is likely to include secret underground passages, trap doors and concealed chambers where Coalition Troops can gain access to the place and hide. This way, the CS troops could launch surgical strikes, kidnap individuals and small groups and seemingly vanish without a trace, and strike from within before the inhabitants knew what hit them. The secret passageways and chambers could also be used to launch two-pronged attacks from CS troops already inside and those coming in from the outside. In the alternative, strategically placed explosives could be used to collapse specific areas, killing all inside. However, the use of explosives prevents repeated use of the trap, although it may be included as a fail-safe feature (can’t get the enemy out, blow ‘em up). Emperor Prosek loves this plan and already has a team of Military Engineers devising ways to use abandoned Xiticix cities as “trap” environments.

Note: Although the CS is likely to keep a few sections of the Hive Networks for “traps,” they will destroy all known Xiticix hives, above and below ground, located in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and perhaps along the border of Manitoba as well. They will not allow large expanses of Mega-Damage housing to remain standing for fear of attracting undesirables — namely D-Bees, practitioners of magic, bandits, dissidents, demons and monsters.

7. The changing political landscape. Ultimately, the Lazlo-Xiticix War contributes to the changing power structure of North America. The future is uncertain.





Ryan
BERES

Psi-Stalkers

A Private War

The Psi-Stalkers war against the Xiticix. An estimated 300,000-500,000 Wild Psi-Stalkers prowl the forests of Minnesota, Manitoba and western Ontario. Their exact numbers are impossible to pin down and are constantly changing, because they are nomads like some Native Americans of old. For the last 30 years, their primary prey has been the Xiticix. Most scholars and analysts credit the Psi-Stalkers (and to a much lesser degree, the CS) for having kept the Xiticix's population growth at the 60-70% annual level rather than higher. Without the Wild Psi-

Stalkers the insect aliens would have spread faster and farther than they have. In fact, the Xiticix have not only become the primary targets of the tribes living in and around the Hivelands, both races have grown to consider one another mortal enemies. As psychic vampires who feed upon the release of P.P.E. from their victims, Psi-Stalkers typically use lethal force against Xiticix, absorbing the doubled P.P.E. at the moment of death and enjoying the thrill of the kill. Likewise, the Xiticix are the leading cause of death among Wild Psi-Stalkers in the region, with 50-

60% of all deaths in mortal combat coming at the hands of the insect aliens. This has led some people to worry about who the Wild Psi-Stalkers may prey upon when the Xiticix are destroyed.

Many clans from the northern tribes will gleefully join any full-scale battle against the Xiticix. The efforts of the Lazlo Army are likely to attract 40,000-75,000 to join them. However, the many tribes and clans are divided and too undisciplined to fight under any kind of organization. Consequently, there will be an additional 60,000-100,000 Psi-Stalkers who will simultaneously wage their own, independent wars against the Xiticix. These independents fight as small bands ranging from as few as a dozen to as many as 1D4x1,100.

Rivalry and one-upmanship between these rival clans is high and makes cooperation and order nearly impossible. Ironically, many clans of Wild Psi-Stalkers will accept the Lazlo troops as allies, friends and even superiors, but refuse to actually work with them. Such rogue bands will do as they please, when they please, regardless of the consequences. Thus, a well laid plan, trap or attack may be compromised, disrupted or ruined by one or more bands of Wild Psi-Stalkers who jump the gun or appear out of nowhere to attack the enemy (in so doing, alerting the enemy to the presence of Lazlo troops or causing Xiticix reinforcements to join the battle, letting an enemy escape, and so on). Some (about 20%) are also likely to steal from Lazlo troops and adventurers or cause other problems like hiding things from them, playing practical jokes, tricking them, misleading them, friendly name calling and brawls, and similar childish behavior. At campsites, Wild Psi-Stalkers are often loud, unruly, undisciplined and generally disruptive. Other times they can be a problem by biting off more than they can chew, requiring outside intervention to help or be destroyed.

On the other hand, these tribal warriors are capable fighters with firsthand knowledge and experience about the enemy. Their presence and unpredictable intervention keeps the Xiticix off guard and will make a serious contribution to the overall war effort. On a more direct and personal level for the Lazlo troops (and player characters), these chaotic maniacs are known to appear out of nowhere, like the proverbial cavalry, to join a fight and save the day. Frequently, it is their unexpected intervention that tips a battle in favor of those fighting the Xiticix. If they join a battle they will not run when the going gets rough either, but stand firm and strong. Despite their other antics, Wild Psi-Stalkers take combat seriously and are loyal and courageous allies. They are especially friendly toward humans and other Psi-Stalkers, although their assistance will almost certainly come with bragging-rights and playful jibes. "Without us, you would have been in a big heap of trouble. Good thing we came along, yes? But don't feel bad, we know how hard this must be for you, puny city-people. Still you have spirit, eh?" And that is a Psi-Stalker being polite.

The vast majority (90+%) of Wild Psi-Stalkers will acknowledge and accept people from Lazlo and most characters who fight the Xiticix, as friends and allies. As such, these post-holocaust wild men will share food, water and information, engage in fair trade of goods and services, provide medical treatment and shelter, hide fugitives from Xiticix (and CS troops), and volunteer to act as scouts or to join a battle. Most are brave and courageous men and women skilled in combat and who know the forests like the back of their hands. If treated with tolerance and respect, these wild and strange human-mutants can make fiercely loyal

and trustworthy allies who will stand at a comrade's side even in the face of overwhelming odds.

Treat them like buffoons, savages or second-class citizens, however, and the Psi-Stalkers will regard the "soft outsiders" with contempt. Those they do not respect are regarded as worthless *vermin* to be used for their own amusement, schemes and advantage. Vermin do not earn nor deserve loyalty, trust, honesty or fair play. They can be lied to, deceived, cheated, tricked and betrayed without consequence, guilt or reprisal. One civilized Psi-Stalker explained it like this:

"A man does not share his bed, food or sympathies with the snake or the rat, unless perhaps, it serves his purpose. Nor does he call the rat a 'friend' or 'equal.' Nobody condemns a man for lying, tricking or stealing from the rat or snake. He is not expected to show these lowly creatures honor, loyalty or compassion. No, they are animals beneath a man's dignity. The rat and the snake are ignored, played with, or crushed under his foot, perhaps even eaten. So it is with all rats and snakes, regardless of their size, race or rank."

It is important to note that an "equal" is any human and most other sentient being worthy of respect — of having value as a fellow living being. This does not necessarily mean the Wild Psi-Stalker likes the individual. Quite the contrary, rivals and enemies are often regarded with respect and equality. It is how a "man" carries himself and treats others, especially those different than himself, that provides the true measure of his worth. Thus, those who accept Psi-Stalkers as (relative) "equals" and treat them with some reasonable measure of equality and respect, are treated in kind and earn their loyalty. Those who do not, are treated like the vermin they are — making the Psi-Stalkers they associate with as dangerous as the enemy they face. Rude, condescending or cruel outsiders are likely to be abandoned to fend for themselves, or even be beaten and robbed. **Note:** This is one reason the Psi-Stalkers work well with the humans of the Coalition States, because most superiors and fellow soldiers sincerely respect and appreciate their abilities, and treat them the same as other soldiers. They have worth and are given trust in the CS army, which earns the CS the Psi-Stalkers' trust and loyalty in return. That having been said, only 50% of the Wild Psi-Stalkers regard the CS as friends or allies. The other half view the CS with apprehension, suspicion and a bit of fear.

Psi-Stalkers who fight the Xiticix, whether with the CS, Lazlo troops or alone, will use lethal force, show no mercy and absorb the enemy's doubled P.P.E. at the moment of death. As their name suggests, Psi-Stalkers are by nature, intuitive hunters, trackers, scouts and warriors. They find being part of a "big war" against the monstrous Xiticix to be exhilarating. The wilder, more challenging and deadly the battle, the more they like it. Wild Psi-Stalkers are the only significant fighting force Lazlo troops can count on with any certainty in their war against the Xiticix.

The Spider Tribe

The elder, experienced Warriors (6th level and up) of this tribe wear a tattoo of a large black spider across their face, typically up on the forehead above the right eye, with its lower legs going over the eye and then down the cheek. Psi-Stalker Shamans of this tribe also wear the spider tattoo, except it is over the left eye. The Spider Tribe is one of the largest, most aggressive and famous of the Canadian Psi-Stalkers. They are said to consider



Manitoba their home and have a long, illustrious history of killing demons, monsters and menaces. They are widely regarded as expert demon slayers and said to be absolutely fearless.

They are absolutely convinced it is their destiny to fight the Xiticix. As a result, the Spider Tribe welcomes the Lazlo Army and thousands cheerfully fight at their side. They are one of the few tribes who sincerely try to work as a team, obey orders (well, mostly) and are the most strongly motivated to be helpful and cooperative. The Spider Warriors, as they call themselves, are at their best on the field of battle. It is said that one Spider Warrior fights with the zeal and power of two soldiers, they stand their ground, follow orders to the letter (usually without hesitation or question), and are fiercely loyal to their comrades in arms. The Spider Warriors may be rude, crude and wild, but they are skilled and experienced fighters and stalwart allies. Or as Orion Greenfeld so eloquently put it to a young, inexperienced CS officer, "Heck, ya kin keep yer Sammies fer yerself. When I'm going up agin dem Xiticix, I'll take two or three o' dem Spider Warriors ta watch my back, if I have any say in da matter."

The legacy of the Spider

The male and female warriors of this tribe wear the spider on their face as a badge of honor, status and tradition. According to folklore and legend, during the Dark Ages, the land known as Manitoba was dominated by Spider Demons (see page 190 of the **Rifts® Conversion Book** for more information about the *Death Weaver Spider Demons*; as well as **Rifts® Vampire Kingdoms™**). These monsters enslaved the people (Psi-Stalkers, humans and Native Americans), forced them and their children

into hard labor, abused their women, tortured the innocent and tormented all who were pressed into their service. Those who dared to oppose them were struck down and devoured. Those who annoyed or failed them were also killed and eaten, for the black-hearted abominations enjoyed the taste of flesh and saw mortal man as nothing more than slaves, food and insects to crush under their heels.

The Spider Demons hated the cold and disappeared during the long winter months, leaving a small legion of lesser demons to keep watch over their chattel and to keep the people working. In the last days of spring, the Spider Demons, twenty in all, would reappear like a pestilence to torment and feed upon their inferiors. The Twenty would spend most of their time along the lines of mystic energy, searching for some great secret of magic. But each year, by mid-September, their mysterious quest would be cut short by the first chill of the north wind and the sting of the coming winter. In their absence, every autumn and winter, the people would wail and moan about their captivity and miserable lives. Every autumn and winter, the men would talk about revenge and seizing their freedom. Yet come spring, the talk would fade to whispers, and none dared to stand against the demons. On the occasions that a few brave souls did try to stand against their tormentors, they were defeated and made to endure horrible deaths before being eaten.

So it was for three generations, before the first Spider Warrior appeared. If it was ever known, his real name has been forgotten over the ages. He called himself the Spider Warrior, and was a powerful man of great physical and spiritual strength. During the autumn he told the people to stop their moaning and wringing of

hands. To look at themselves for strength and to stop thinking of themselves as helpless slaves. He spoke of hope and love, and freedom.

In the winter, he spoke of battle, triumph and destiny. He told the people that anything worth having usually came with a high price. That freedom often came with the highest price of all, but it was a battle worth fighting. He bid them to stand together against a common enemy and foretold that united they could defeat the Spider Demons. That thousands could succeed where a handful had no chance of winning. That together, their strength of numbers could overcome any obstacle. And although he promised not to just chase The Twenty away, but destroy them utterly, he also warned that their freedom would come with the heavy price of death for thousands. That each and every person would feel the sorrow of losing friends and family members, for while they could win the battle by sheer strength of numbers alone, the Spider Demons and their minions would slay many before they would fall.

When spring came, the Spider Warrior stepped out of the crowd and told his evil masters that he and "his people" would serve them no longer. The Spider Demons laughed and said the people were mindless sheep too timid to stand against such power as they, and that he was a fool who was about to die. The Spider Warrior clenched his fists, grinned and growled, "Then I will be the first to fall so that my people live free." And with that, he lunged into the startled Spider Demon flailing with his bare fists.

It is said that the cry of the people that day howled like the wind of a fierce winter storm. That their sudden and ferocious change came on like a November Witch. And when the storm ended, the Spider Demons were destroyed. Their minions scattered to the wind. And the people stood triumphant, united and free.

That is how the Spider Tribe came into being. They have been fighting demons and the supernatural ever since.

No other Psi-Stalker tribe dares to wear a spider as their insignia. Not out of fear, but out of respect. Furthermore, all insist the story of the tribe's origin and their defeat of the Spider Demons is real. Even the Inuit and other Native Americans know the story and believe it is true. Even the Simvan Monster Riders respect and fear this tribe. Legend also has it that the Xiticix can not be eradicated from the land without the help of the Spider Warriors. It is their legacy.

A new day, a new war

Considering the myth surrounding the tribe's origin, it is little wonder that they have been actively fighting the Xiticix for decades, or why they accept the Xiticix War as part of their destiny. 50,000 are ready to join the Lazlo troops immediately, another 9,000 fight as independent mavericks and the rest of the tribe (approx. 60,000), mostly women, children and the elderly, remain out of the conflict, at least for now.

Of the 50,000, 25% are 1st-3rd level, 50% 4th-7th level, 20% 8th-10th level, and 5% higher levels of experience. This is their fight as much (or more) than anybody else's, and they welcome it. Like their forefathers, they see the arrival of the Lazlo force as the new gathering of the people to stand against a common, inhuman foe. Should every last Spider Warrior perish, they will not have died in vain.

Special Bonuses & Notes for members of the Spider Tribe:

All bonuses are in addition to those normally acquired from attributes, skills and R.C.C. considerations.

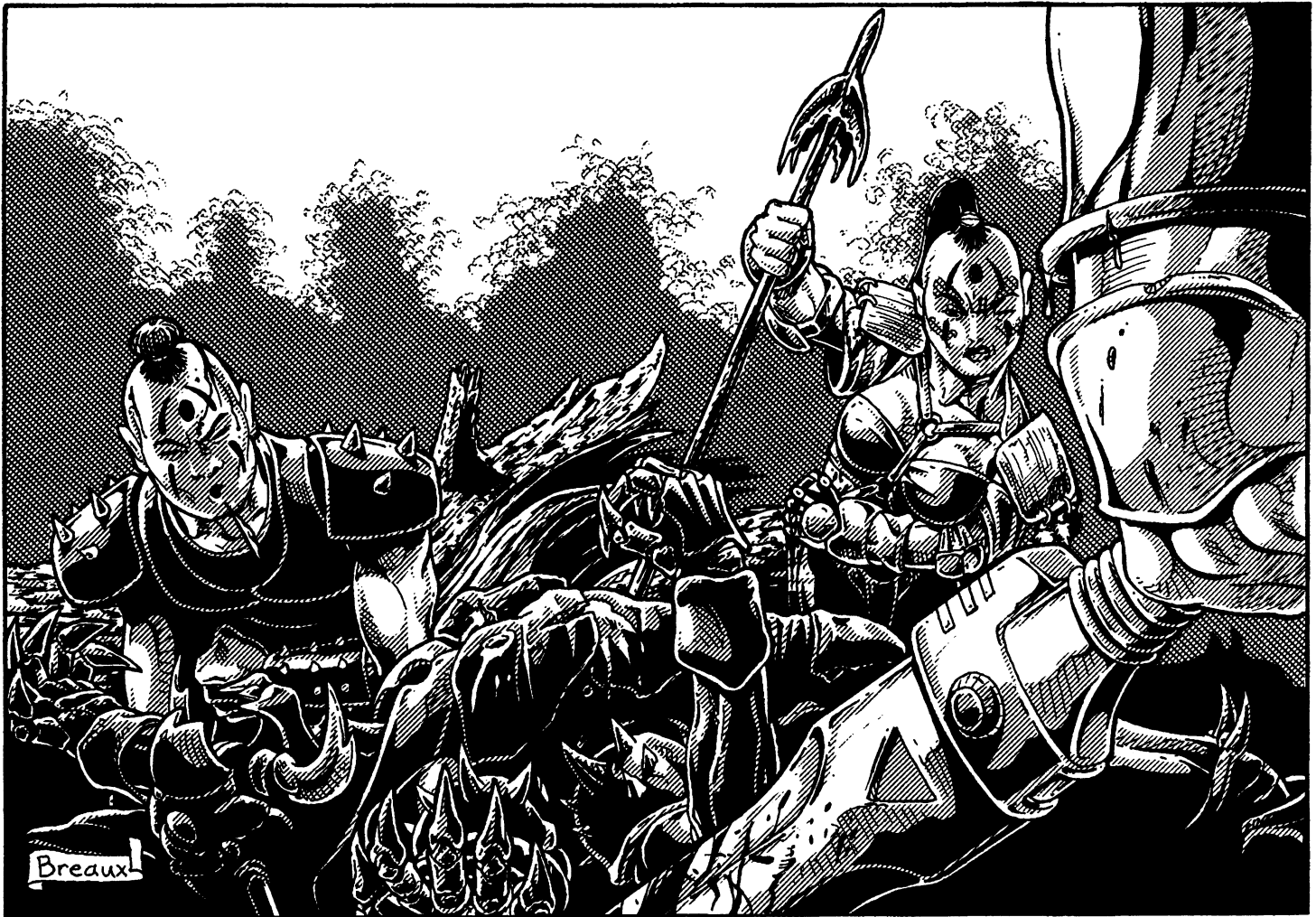
- +2 to M.A., M.E. and P.S.
- +3 on initiative and +1 to strike.
- +2 to save vs possession.
- +2 to save vs Horror Factor, in addition to attribute and normal R.C.C. bonuses.
- +5% to sense and track the supernatural and Xiticix. The Spider Warriors have become a bit more attuned to the supernatural and their long-time enemies, the Xiticix, than other Psi-Stalkers. The Xiticix are easy for the Psi-Stalkers track because of their familiarity with the region and the bug men, and because of the Xiticix's high level of P.P.E.
- Alignment Breakdown: 45% good, 20% Unprincipled, 20% Anarchist and 15% other.
- Weapon Note: 25% use magic weapons, mostly Techno-Wizard items of all varieties, 25% use Xiticix resin weapons, and the rest use modern weapons, including Vibro-Blades and energy weapons.

Pony-Tail Tribe

The Pony-Tail Tribe is unique in that they glue and sometimes stitch right into their scalps, long strands of hair worn in top-knots and pony-tails. About 10% of the warriors attach strips of studded leather or even a length of chain to their scalps. It is just how they distinguish themselves from other tribes. Most also paint or tattoo on eyebrows, and all warriors wear the tribal face pattern of an oval in the center of the forehead with a line running from the forehead to the side of the mouth.

Like the Spider Warriors, the people of the Pony-Tail Tribe consider themselves to be great warriors. The two tribes are also ancient rivals — friendly enemies, if you will — who often compete against one another and sometimes clash, but rarely with serious casualties. They are willing to trade and associate with one another and members from both tribes (mainly independent fighters) will join forces to battle the Xiticix. Like most Psi-Stalkers of the midwest, the Pony-Tail Warriors regard as the bug men as their mortal enemies.

The biggest point of contention between the two tribes is that the Spider Warriors dislike and frequently war with the Simvan Monster Riders, while the Pony-Tail Tribe regards the Simvan as friends. The Pony-Tails regularly trade with Simvan, share time and even hunt together. The only thing that keeps the peace is the fact that no member of the Pony-Tail tribe has ever stood with the Simvan against his own people. This gesture has not earned the Pony-Tail Warriors any brownie-points with the Spider Tribe who believe to do otherwise constitutes the ultimate betrayal of one's heritage. The Pecos Tribes are not so forgiving and loathe them as traitors. Whenever these two factions clash, the result is always a high body count, usually with the Pecos Stalkers the worse for wear. Thankfully, encounters between these two factions are uncommon as the Pecos Tribes generally keep to Lone Star and the southwest and the Pony-Tails keep to the north and northwest.



The Pony-Tail Tribe is one of the largest Psi-Stalker tribes in the country, with an estimated population of 160,000 to 200,000. They may be the largest in the country, with the Spider Tribe a close second or third at roughly 120,000 to 140,000. The tribal leaders do not know or care how many there are, and the CS and other outside observers can not make an accurate estimate, because the tribe is splintered into over six dozen large clans and hundreds of small bands scattered throughout the midwestern United States and southern Canada.

The majority seem to consider the Minnesota-Dakota region as their main hunting grounds, but members of this tribe can be found everywhere, including Simvan territory to the west and throughout southern Canada. The Pony-Tails are constantly involved in skirmishes against the Xiticix in the Minnesota-Dakota region, but they refuse to join forces with others, not even the Coalition Military or other Psi-Stalker Tribes. Part of the reason is that the Pony-Tails don't trust technology, civilization or the Coalition States (which represents the pinnacle of the first two). Despite their association with Simvan, the Pony-Tails do not particularly like or trust D-Bees and avoid them. Battles with D-Bees are usually savage and especially bloody. Encounters with non-humans or Psi-Stalkers are usually brisk, cool and harsh. It would seem these Psi-Stalkers just want to be left alone and do as they please, and don't appreciate outsiders who don't belong.

Special Bonuses & Notes for members of the Pony-Tail Tribe:

All bonuses are in addition to those normally acquired from attributes, skills and R.C.C. considerations.

- +3 to P.S. and Spd attributes.
- +1 to P.B. attribute.
- +14 to S.D.C.
- +2 to initiative

Average level of experience: 4-7th level, with 20% 1-3rd level, 25% 8-10th level, and 3% 11th or higher.

- Alignment Breakdown: 30% good, 15% Unprincipled, 35% Anarchist and 20% other.
- Weapon Note: 30% use magic weapons, mostly Techno-Wizard melee weapons (swords, axes, spears, etc.). 35% use Xiticix resin weapons, and the rest use modern weapons, with a particular liking for Vibro-Blades.

Deathbringer Warriors

A Necromancer Cult

Psi-Stalkers do not usually accept outsiders, especially practitioners of magic, as their leaders, but this strange tribe has done exactly that. Living among a small tribe of 860 Psi-Stalkers is a cult of 31 Necromancers (mostly humans) who serve as the group's spiritual leaders and war chiefs. Surprisingly, these

Necromancers and their Psi-Stalker minions are not particularly evil and are known as a strange but helpful group. They tend to keep to themselves in the Thunder Bay area, but when they are encountered, the Necromancers and Deathbringer Psi-Stalkers are surprisingly reserved and friendly. It is only when they are threatened or challenged that they become unholy terrors.

The Deathbringer Tribe hates the Xiticix, whom they see as a threat to all “life,” and have been actively fighting them for the last ten years. To this end they have adopted many strange and creepy customs. All the Deathbringer Psi-Stalkers wear body armor made from the exoskeletons of slain Xiticix, and they use the Xiticix’s own resin weapons against them. The only exceptions are weapons made or provided by the Necromancers, usually from the bones and bodies of vanquished Xiticix (claws, spikes, spines, mandibles, etc.) or Techno-Wizard items, and the occasional modern weapon (usually for long-range firepower). Even the helmets they wear are made from the skulls of Xiticix Warriors or Leapers (never any other), and many wear gauntlets and reinforced forearm units that are made from the claws of the insect aliens.

The Necromancers wear a headdress fashioned from the skulls of slain Hunters or Super-Warriors, and a cape made from their wings. In combat they attach 2-6 Xiticix arms to themselves as extra appendages and weapons, and animate a legion of dead Xiticix Warriors to join the battle.

The Necromancers are all expert at removing the various Xiticix glands and using their poisons and chemicals against the Xiticix (and others). As a result, the Deathbringers are masters at disguising themselves as Xiticix and have not only gotten inside the tunnels, but have travelled deep into the labyrinth undetected. Their ruse is made possible by the use of the Xiticix scent gland for the Colony I.D. scent, and helped along by their Xiticix armored appearance. Other than the magic and bone weapons provided by the Necromancers, the Deathbringer Psi-Stalkers only use the resin weapons of their enemy, adding to the effectiveness of their disguise. Even other Psi-Stalkers, CS soldiers and Woodsmen occasionally mistake these warriors, clad in their chitinous gray armor and Xiticix skull helmets, as the genuine article — at least for a moment or from a distance. Some of the telltale differences are that these “warriors” do not have wings, do not fly, usually have only two arms and move like men rather than insects.

Their strange fetish and ability to effectively “become Xiticix” will make this cult invaluable (if repulsive and frightening) allies in penetrating the inner sanctum of the hive and locating Queens, Egg Chambers and Nurseries.

They want to fight the Xiticix and immediately volunteer to join the Lazlo war effort.

Special Bonuses & Notes for Wild Psi-Stalkers in the Deathbringer Cult

All bonuses are in addition to those normally acquired from attributes, skills and R.C.C. considerations. Don’t forget, Psi-Stalkers only need to roll a 6 or higher to save vs psionics, and are +5 to save vs mind control and mind altering drugs. See Special Abilities and Bonuses of the Psi-Stalker R.C.C.

- +1 to save vs Horror Factor.
- +1 to save vs possession.
- +1 on initiative.
- +3 to save vs poisons and drugs.

- +20 to S.D.C. and +1D6 to Hit Points, thanks to the practice of strange rituals and body hardening exercises taught to them by their Necromancer mentors.
- Average level of experience: 70% are 3-6th level, 15% 1-2nd level, and 15% 7-9th level. All are practicing cannibals.
- Alignment Breakdown: 15% Unprincipled, 40% Anarchist, 25% Aberrant, 10% Miscreant and 10% other.
- Hand to Hand: Expert (01-50%) or Martial Arts (51-00%).
- Average number of attacks per round: 5-6 attacks per melee round on average.
- Weapon Note: 85% use Xiticix resin weapons, 10% magic weapons (mostly Necromancer and Techno-Wizard items), and 5% use Vibro-Blades and other modern weapons along with a Xiticix resin weapon or two.
- Body Armor is made from the exoskeletons of Xiticix Warriors or Leapers with reinforcements and padding. Non-environmental, typically has 3D6+50 M.D.C.; the exact amount varies with each individual suit.

A few words about the Deathbringer Necromancers

According to rumor and gossip the founder of the cult, **Quiwan Li**, originates from *China*. Rumor also claims he is an immortal. How or why he has come to North America is a mystery. He says it was to escape the horrors of life in China as a slave to demons. He also says he decided to settle in the Thunder Bay area because this is where he was most needed. The High Lord Necromancer claims he does not want to see the rest of the world become like China, infested by demons and monsters who rule over men. So he stopped to build a group of warriors to help stand up against the Xiticix invaders. He also claims to have foreseen Lazlo’s intervention ten years ago, which is why he prepared his warriors and disciples for this day, and has developed methods to disguise themselves and sneak into the hives.

The middle-aged looking Oriental approves of Lazlo’s plan, and will have his men do whatever is necessary to help. Only he, four of his most trusted and high level Necromancer disciples and two dozen Psi-Stalkers stay out of the conflict. If asked why, he smiles and says he must insure that he and some of his disciples survive, so they may prepare for the next great war against demonkind that will take place in the west (Does he mean China or the Calgary Rift? He won’t say).

Quiwan Li, High Lord Necromancer NPC

The Xiticix fighters of Lazlo have accepted the Deathbringers’ help, but with concern and serious reservations. They don’t normally encourage or associate with Necromancers, and have already turned down offers of help from Necromancers, Shifters and other unsavory characters from the Federation of Magic. A decision that has only increased the animosity of the Federation toward the Kingdom of Lazlo (the Federation sees them as rivals and righteous fools). When word gets to them that the Lazlo forces accepted help from a little known group of Necromancers, it will infuriate the Federation of Magic and stoke the fires of hatred and treachery.

As for the Deathbringers, there is no doubt that they know the enemy better than most, really can get inside the hive and seem

sincere about destroying the Xiticix. These Psi-Stalkers and Necromancers are obedient, respectful and helpful, never disruptive or divisive. Still, the Lazlo heroes wonder if they or their leader, Quiwan Li, have some secret agenda — it is difficult to trust such an evil and mysterious character.

Quiwan Li, High Lord Necromancer

Note: The self-assigned title of High Lord Necromancer is a title he says he earned in China.

Also Known as Master Li.

Race: Human, Chinese.

Alignment: Aberrant evil, but seems sincere about destroying Xiticix and demons.

Hit Points: 169 & **S.D.C.:** 240 — the equivalent of 4 M.D.C.; don't ask how this is possible, he won't say.

Weight: 140 lbs (63 kg); **Height:** 5 feet 8 inches (1.73 m)

Age: He looks to be in his late forties or early fifties, but claims to be 226 years old.

P.P.E.: 198

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 15, M.A. 22, P.S. 20, P.P. 19, P.E. 21, P.B. 10, Spd 12

Disposition: Confident and positive, yet soft-spoken. When Quiwan speaks, he exudes a feeling of quiet strength, sincerity, truth and wisdom. His disciples have never heard him shout in anger or fear, and they trust and obey him implicitly.

Experience Level: 13th level Russian/Chinese Necromancer

Skills of Note: Literate in Chinese and Euro, speaks Chinese, Euro and English, Basic Math, Lore: Monsters & Demons, Lore: Russian & Chinese Demons & Monsters, Art, Calligraphy, and Writing, all at 98%, plus Skin & Prepare Animal Hides & Bones and Wilderness Survival at 95%. Weapon Proficiencies: W.P. Automatic Pistol, W.P. Revolver, W.P. Knife, and W.P. Blunt, all at 13th level proficiency.

Magic Knowledge: Necromancer (Russian/Chinese): Bone Magic levels 1-5, plus Wear the Face of Another, Poison Touch, Mock Funeral, Funeral Pyre, Fragile Bone to M.D.C. Bone, Greater Animated Dead, Bone Staff, and Transfer Life Force.

Conventional magic spells include: Death Trance, Fear, Aura of Death, Aura of Doom, Globe of Daylight, Lantern Light, Concealment, Fire Ball, Cloak of Darkness, Shadow Meld, Breathe Without Air, Life Source, Ley Line Transmission, Commune with Spirits, Repel Animals, Turn Dead, Constrain Being, Exorcism, Sickness, Spoil, Armorbane, Restore Limb and Tongues. P.P.E.: 198

Special Necromancer Powers: See *Rifts® Mystic Russia™* pages 83-107, for complete details on the character's abilities and Necro-Magic. *Rifts® Africa* offers similar information but is not quite as complete or comprehensive (i.e. no Bone Magic).

1. Union with the Dead.
2. Augmentation with Additional Appendages.
3. Animate and Control Dead.

Psionic Powers: None, although he claims to be visited by visions and insight.

Insanity: Obsessed with ridding the Earth of demons and demonic monsters. Also obsessed with dead things. Loves to surround himself with skeletons, zombies, corpses, bones and such. Phobia: Fears the gods of light, particularly Anubis.

Combat Skills: Martial Arts at 13th level proficiency.

Attacks per Melee: Six



Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +4 to strike, +7 to parry and dodge, +9 to damage (S.D.C. damage; P.S. bonus), +4 to roll with impact/punch, +3 to pull punch, critical strike on roll of natural 18-20, judo body throw, all kick attacks, Karate-style kick 2D4, and paired weapons.

Other bonuses: +4 to save vs poison and magic, +5 to save vs Necromancy magic, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, and 70% likelihood of evoking trust or intimidation.

Weapons: Tends to rely on his cunning, magic knowledge, Necro-powers, and animated dead.

Body Armor: Creates a suit of Necro-Armor made from a dead Xiticix or any corpse as needed (169 M.D.C., & Horror Factor 13).

Cybernetics: None and will avoid them like the plague.

Master Li's Necromancer Disciples

The Deathbringer Necromancers are all disciples of Master Li, which means they all practice the Russian-Chinese version of Necromancy, including *Bone Magic*. It also means their knowledge and abilities are limited to what Master Li has taught them.

Most are fanatically loyal to Quiwan Li, but three of the 6th level mages (all Anarchist) and two of the 7th level Necromancers (one Miscreant, one Diabolic) have become disenchanted with their lifestyle, as well as Master Li's obsession with destroying demons and monsters. They would like to go off on their own and make a different life for themselves. All are among those assigned to work with the Lazlo Xiticix Fighters and are likely to use this opportunity to desert and slip away. Fortunately, except for *Brok Magnil*, the Diabolic, 7th level Necromancer, the others will stay until the end of the war, when it is clear the allied Lazlo forces have won the war. They feel they owe their "great and illustrious Master" that much.

Typical Deathbringer Necromancer

Race: The Deathbringer Necromancers are predominantly human, with one who is an Elf and two who are Aardan Tek (see page 130 of *Rifts® Canada* for details about these D-Bees).

Levels of Experience:

- Four are 2nd level.
- Three are 4th level (the two Aardan Tek among them).
- Three are 5th level.
- Eleven are 6th level (the Elf among them).
- Seven are 7th level
- Three are 8th level.

Alignments: 50% are Aberrant, 30% Anarchist, 10% Miscreant, and 10% Diabolic. All are trained in the Russian/Chinese style of Necromancy.

Most have the following basic abilities and training, but higher level characters will possess more Necro-Magic.

Magic Knowledge: Necromancer (Russian/Chinese): Bone Magic levels 1-2 and Necro-Armor, plus two additional Bone Magic Spells selected from levels 3-5 per level of experience.

Conventional magic spells include: Death Trance, Fear, Aura of Death, Globe of Daylight, Lantern Light, Concealment, Fire Ball, Cloak of Darkness, Commune with Spirits, Repel Animals, Turn Dead, Exorcism, and Tongues, plus one additional spell (selected from those known to Master Li) per level of experience.

P.P.E.: 2D4x10 +P.E. attribute and 2D6 points per level of experience.

Special Necromancer Powers: See *Rifts® Mystic Russia™* pages 83-107, for complete details on the character's abilities and Necro-Magic. *Rifts® Africa* offers similar information but is not quite as complete or comprehensive (i.e. no Bone Magic).

1. Union with the Dead.
2. Augmentation with Additional Appendages.
3. Animate and Control Dead.

Psionics: Four have Minor Psionics, one Major.

Insanities: At least one, often two, as per standard for the Necromancer O.C.C.

O.C.C. Skills: Standard for Necromancer O.C.C.

Attacks per Melee: 4-5

Bonuses: As per Necromancer O.C.C. and high attributes.

Weapons: Tend to rely on cunning, magic knowledge, Necro-powers, and animated dead, but all above fourth level have one magic weapon, typically a Techno-Wizard device and one modern weapon, typically an energy pistol or rifle. All also have a Vibro-Knife.

Body Armor: Necromancers who are 5th level or higher usually create Necro-Armor, which at 5th level has 65 M.D.C. (+13 per level of experience) and a Horror Factor of 13. Lower level Death Mages wear armor made from Xiticix Hunter or Super-Warrior exoskeletons with reinforcements and padding. Non-environmental, typically has 3D6+50 M.D.C.; the exact amount varies with each individual suit.

Cybernetics: None and will avoid them like the plague.



Brok Magnil, Evil Necromancer

Brok Magnil does not share his colleagues' acceptance of life as demon and monster slayers, nor does he care about the Xiticix War. He respects the old man's knowledge, but believes he is insane and misguided. Brok wants them to use their power to

build their own empires and longs for personal power and glory. He knows he could leave the cult at any time, but fears they will try to talk him out of it, chastise his decision, and keep an eye on his activities. Brok fears Master Li will oppose his schemes to build his own kingdom through intimidation and subjugation, so he plans on slipping away during the war and either heading to the Magic Zone or east.

Brok will stay for the early part of the war to test his power and flex his muscles, but will desert sooner or later. He has not decided whether he will fake his death or just slip away. This Necromancer is arrogant, merciless and cruel. He hates it when he has to “bow down to others,” becomes angry when people do not take his suggestions, and hates being told what to do. He desires to be in charge and will remember any heroes who oppose him, make him look bad, or get in his way. **G.M. Note:** Feel free to develop this malevolent character as a troublesome Non-Player Character and recurring villain.

Brok Magnil, likes to call himself “Deathstrike”

Race: Human; born in Manitoba.

Alignment: Diabolic evil

Hit Points: 69; **S.D.C.:** 40

Weight: 160 lbs; **Height:** 6 feet (1.8 m)

Age: 32

P.P.E.: 131

Attributes: I.Q. 12, M.E. 14, M.A. 12, P.S. 23, P.P. 20, P.E. 21, P.B. 10, Spd 12

Disposition: Cocky, hedonistic, mean, spiteful and cruel. He wants the power, glory and respect of a king (i.e. all others bow down before him), and he wants it now.

Experience Level: 7th level Russian/Chinese Necromancer.

Skills of Note: Literate in Euro, speaks Euro and English, Basic Math, Lore: Monsters & Demons, and swim, all at 98%, plus Skin & Prepare Animal Hides & Bones and Wilderness Survival at 75%, and W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Knife, and W.P. Blunt at 7th level proficiency.

Magic Knowledge: Necromancer (Russian/Chinese): Bone Magic levels 1-3, plus Command Ghouls, Necro-Armor, Wear the Face of Another, Poison Touch, Mock Funeral, Funeral Pyre, Fragile Bone to M.D.C. Bone, Greater Animated Dead, Bone Staff, and Transfer Life Force.

Conventional magic spells include: Death Trance, Fear, Aura of Death, Aura of Doom, Globe of Daylight, Lantern Light, Concealment, Fire Ball, Cloak of Darkness, Shadow Meld, Breathe Without Air, Life Source, Ley Line Transmission, Commune with Spirits, Repel Animals, Turn Dead, Constrain Being, Exorcism, Sickness, Spoil, Armorbane, Restore Limb and Tongues. P.P.E.: 131

Special Necromancer Powers: See *Rifts® Mystic Russia™* pages 83-107, for complete details on the character’s abilities and Necro-Magic. *Rifts® Africa* offers similar information but is not quite as complete or comprehensive (i.e. no Bone Magic).

1. Union with the Dead.
2. Augmentation with Additional Appendages.
3. Animate and Control Dead.

Psionic Powers: None.

Insanity: Obsessed with acquiring power and has sadistic tendencies.

Combat Skills: Martial Arts at 7th level proficiency.

Attacks per Melee: Five

Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +4 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +7 to damage (S.D.C. damage), +3 to roll with impact/punch, +3 to pull punch, critical strike on roll of natural 18-20, judo body throw, all kick attacks, Karate-style kick which does 2D4, and paired weapons.

Other bonuses: +3 to save vs poison and magic, +5 to save vs Necromancy magic, and +6 to save vs Horror Factor.

Weapons: Tends to rely on his cunning, treachery, magic knowledge, Necro-powers, and animated dead, but will do anything to get what he wants and carries a concealed ion pistol and Wilk’s Laser Wand.

Cybernetics: None and will avoid them like the plague.

Psi-Stalker™ R.C.C.

Reprinted from Rifts® World Book 13: Lone Star, with new material.

The Psi-stalker is a mutant human who, during the Dark Age after the Great Cataclysm, evolved to feed on psychic energy and developed psychic sensitive powers. Fallen to barbarism, Psi-Stalkers, as a race, have survived for over two centuries as hunters of the supernatural and practitioners of magic. Unlike normal humans, the Psi-Stalker is a natural predator and P.P.E. vampire! The predator senses the use of psychic and magic energy (I.S.P. and P.P.E.), and can trace the distinctive energy trail like a bloodhound following a specific scent. Even though all creatures have a certain level of potential psychic energy (P.P.E.), the Psi-Stalker can tell the subtle differences between normal energies and those exuded by psionics and magic. Some innate instinct draws the Stalker to those creatures who are psionic, magical or supernatural. This same instinct makes the mutant want to *kill* his prey and drink its P.P.E. (which, for a brief instant, doubles at the moment of death). Fortunately, Psi-Stalkers can resist their bloodlust and train themselves not to kill. However, even these “restrained” and “civilized” Psi-Stalkers love the thrill of the hunt and would prefer to kill when they feed. If nothing else, it makes life easier to kill the prey and feast on the doubled amount of P.P.E. released at the moment of death. It is a bigger rush and much more satisfying.

The Coalition States have trained some of these *mutant humans* to become an elite military police force in the Burbs and CS cities, as well as Wilderness Scouts in the CS Military. The Coalition also frequently hires “freelance” Wild Psi-Stalkers for operations outside the borders of the Coalition States, particularly for scouting/reconnaissance, tracking, and assassination. Those who are used in the cities specialize in hunting down psychic and magic-using criminals, supernatural beings, and paranormal interlopers. In addition to the Stalkers’ natural abilities, the warriors are trained in basic military procedure and combat skills, as well as to control their urge to kill. The Coalition Psi-Stalkers will not kill unless the soldier is given authorization to use deadly force, which is always approved when stalking a demon or other supernatural being, and frequently when in pursuit of dangerous criminals.

Coalition Psi-Stalkers generally lead Dog Packs, or are part of a Special Forces team or other special operation, especially those involving practitioners of magic, psychics, monsters and the supernatural. A full 15% of the Coalition Army is composed

of Psi-Stalkers. Although most are obedient and loyal to the CS, many are bolder, less official and disrespectful of officers they don't like. This is due, in part, to their "Second Class Citizen" stature within Coalition society (many normal citizens fear them) and their more aggressive nature. No matter how loyal, controlled or capable the individual may be, the Coalition's stance against nonhumans means Psi-Stalkers can never achieve the same levels of rank as "true humans." They are *mutants* after all, and as such, are not the equal of true men. Thus, the best rank a Psi-Stalker can achieve is Command Sergeant Major, but few achieve a rank higher than Master Sergeant. Psi-Stalkers in the CS Military or Police Force can be distinguished from other Coalition soldiers by their spiked helmets and the letters "PSI" emblazoned on the chest of their armor and uniforms. ALL Coalition Psi-Stalkers are registered psychics with the IC and bear the IC bar code and implant.

Distinctive Traits

Psi-Stalkers *are* different from true humans. In addition to their famous psychic powers and the fact that they live on psychic energy rather than solid food, they are strikingly different in physical appearance. Average height is more consistent at 6 feet to 6.6 inches tall, half are ambidextrous, neither male or female has any body hair (not on their heads, arms, legs, or anywhere), and their skin is a pale, powder white with faint hints of pink around their lips and eyes. Their eyes are typically a piercing blue or a smoldering gray. Most Psi-Stalkers suffer from a certain amount of hyper-tension and like to be physically active. *Wild Psi-Stalkers* (and some CS) often adorn their bodies with tattoos or war paint, and like to look more menacing than they really are.

Special Powers & Abilities of the Psi-Stalker

Note: The following powers are different or more powerful than some of the common psionic powers which these abilities may resemble, and are limited to the Psi-Stalker R.C.C. All Psi-Stalkers, CS, civilized or wild, have the same natural abilities, only their level of self-control, availability of skills and equipment vary.

1. Sense Psychic and Magic Energy: Like a bloodhound smelling a familiar scent, the Psi-Stalker can detect the presence of psychic energy; specifically fellow psionics (I.S.P.) and magic (P.P.E. specifically oriented toward magic, Techno-Wizardry, and magical devices). The ability is constant and automatic. The moment the psychic "scent" is within the character's range, he or she will recognize it. For example: If a psychic (minor, major, or master) enters the room, the Psi-Stalker will instantly sense it, as well as be able to trace it to the specific individual.

Furthermore, the Stalker has a chance of recognizing that specific person's psychic scent again. This ability also enables him to stalk/track a specific psychic scent. **Base Skill:** 20% +5% per additional level of experience. If the Psi-Stalker has a bit of hair, skin, blood, or an article of clothing recently worn (4 hours or less) by the subject being hunted, the ability to follow the psychic trail enjoys a bonus of +20%.

If psionic powers or magic are being used within the Psi-Stalker's range of sensitivity, he will sense that too. The psychic impression will indicate whether the energy source is far or near, up or down, and whether it is a small or great amount of energy. If the energy is being continually expended, like a series of magic spells or psionic attacks, or a long duration effect, the predator

can track it to the source with ease. **Base Skill:** 60% +5% per level of experience (roll once every melee). It is also likely that the character will recognize the scent again if encountered at some other time; 20% +5% per level of experience.

The presence of other P.P.E. sources may confuse the scent and inflicts a -10% skill penalty (-20% if numerous sources). Close proximity to a ley line (2 miles/3.2 km) will reduce the ability to track a specific psychic scent by half. Close proximity to a ley line nexus point (4 miles/6.4 km) will completely obliterate the scent, making it impossible to find or pick up later. This is one reason why Psi-Stalkers are rarely found near a ley line unless a large number of prey inhabit the area. Of course, this also means that a Psi-Stalker can sense ley lines or a nexus point from up to 10 miles (16 km) away, plus one mile (1.6 km) per level of experience.

Ranges: Sensitivity to a fellow psychic or magic practitioner *not* using his powers is 50 feet (15 m) +20 feet (6 m) per each additional level of experience.

Sensitivity to psionic and magic powers being used is 600 feet (182 m), +100 feet (30.5 m) per level of experience.

When tracking a psychic scent, roll percentile dice every 1000 feet (305 m) to see if the hunter is still on the trail.

Duration: Automatic and constant.

I.S.P.: None, automatic ability.

2. Sense supernatural beings: Identical in function to the previous ability, except one senses the super distinctive psychic scent of the supernatural. The ability to identify the specific type of paranormal creature is a **Base Skill:** 40% +5% per level of experience, and includes demons, vampires, and entities.

Tracking by psychic scent alone is a **Base Skill:** 30% +5% per level of experience. 70% +3% per level of experience if the supernatural being is expending psionic or magic energy while the Stalker is on his trail.

Ranges: Sensitivity to the presence of a supernatural being *not* using its powers is 50 feet (15 m) per level of experience. Sensitivity to supernatural magic or psionics being expended through spell weaving or psi-attacks, is 1000 feet (305 m) +100 feet (30.5 m) per additional level of experience.

Duration: Automatic and constant.

I.S.P.: None, automatic.

Note: Close proximity to ley lines and nexus points always has the exact same adverse effects.

3. Psi-Bonuses: As a master psionic, the Psi-Stalker needs to roll a 10 or higher to save versus psionic attack, and enjoys a bonus of +4 to save (additional bonuses from M.E. not applicable). This means the character must roll a 6 or higher to save vs psionics! +5 to save vs mind control and mind altering drugs; +6 to save vs Horror Factor!

4. Magic Bonuses: Natural magic resistance provides a bonus of +1D4 to save versus magic attacks of any kind.

5. Physical Attributes & Bonuses: Roll 3D6 for each attribute plus the following bonuses: +1D6 to M.E. attribute (psionic saving bonuses are not cumulative), +1D6 to P.E., +2D6 to speed attribute; +10 to physical S.D.C., +1 attack per melee round, ambidextrous, and paired weapons. Can leap six feet (1.8 m) high or 10 feet (3 m) long (add 20% to length with running start), and has excellent balance (80% +2% per level of experience). Remember, needs little solid food and water to live, subsists on P.P.E.

6. Nourishment: The Psi-Stalker must feed on a minimum of 50 P.P.E. or I.S.P. a week, preferably 80 to 100. To feed without killing, the predator must hunt down a psychic, practitioner of magic, or supernatural creature, physically capture the prey, cut it, and psionically drain *all* its available P.P.E. points. Other than the cut (1D6 S.D.C. damage) the victim suffers, he temporarily loses all P.P.E., a potentially dangerous situation for any magic user, but hardly life threatening.

Psychics temporarily lose *half* their I.S.P. from a Psi-Stalker energy drain, as well as *all* their P.P.E. Once the Psi-Stalker begins to feed, he cannot stop until all the P.P.E. has been absorbed. The absorption process is nearly instantaneous (about 5 seconds or two melee actions). P.P.E. and I.S.P. will recover naturally, but this temporarily disrupts the victim's psychic essence and mages are left with no personal P.P.E. to draw upon to cast magic.

Note: The Psi-Stalker can *not* feed on the P.P.E. of beings who are not psychic, practitioners of magic, or supernatural in nature. They can, however, absorb mystic ley line energy, but the taste is bad, like sour milk, and the ley lines disrupt the character's senses.

The preferred form of nourishment, even among civilized Psi-Stalkers, is to hunt and kill one's victim. The victim can be a psychic, practitioner of magic, creature of magic (faerie folk, dragon, etc.) or supernatural being. At the moment of death, the victim's P.P.E. is doubled. The stalker can absorb the energy of his kill from as far as 300 yards/meters away.

No need for normal food or water! As P.P.E. energy vampires, Psi-Stalkers have little need to consume solid food or water. The mutant does not require more than one pound (0.45 kg) of meat and eight ounces of water a week to remain healthy and strong. Furthermore, the character can go without solid food or water for up to three weeks, if necessary, without the slightest ill effect. However, being deprived of the proper P.P.E. energy will inflict physical damage and the character will die of starvation within three weeks.

P.P.E. Base: 2D6; needs to consume a minimum of 50 P.P.E. per week to function without fatigue, weakness or penalty. For every week with less than 50 P.P.E., the Psi-Stalker suffers 6D6 points of damage to both Hit Points and S.D.C., down to a minimum of two points each, and reduce all bonuses and attacks per melee by half. After three weeks of starvation the character will be so weak that unless P.P.E. becomes available, he will die within 1D6 days.

7. Other Psionic Powers: Choose six psi-powers from the *sensitive* category. **I.S.P.:** M.E. attribute number +1D6x10 plus an additional 10 I.S.P. for each level of experience. Considered a master psionic. I.S.P. is regained at the rate of two points per hour of activity, or 12 per hour of meditation or sleep.

8. Psionic empathy with animals. Psi-Stalkers automatically have an affinity with animals of all kinds. Domesticated animals will always take an immediate liking to them and will do their best to please him. This empathy automatically gives the mutant the ability to ride any horse (wild or tame) or any other non-predatory animal at +15% bonus to ride them and/or work with any domestic animals.

Wild animals, with the exception of felines and mutant or alien predators, will react to the Psi-Stalker as if he was a fellow woodland creature and allow him to walk among them without fear. This ability enables Psi-Stalkers to operate in the wild with-

out animals reacting to their presence; birds do not fly away, animals do not run, and therefore do not indicate the approach of an intruder. Even watchdogs will not sound a bark of alarm at their presence, and Dog Boys and mutant bears usually get along with them famously. **Note:** The affinity with animals means that the character will hunt and eat meat only for food, never for pleasure, and feels sadness whenever he sees an animal in distress.

Felines and mutant or alien predators seem to see the Psi-Stalker as a fellow hunter and a threat. Wild cats and mutant felines will frequently select a Psi-Stalker as their first target in an attack, and will not respond to the character in a positive manner regardless of how nice the Psi-Stalker may be. And (other than Xiticix) Psi-Stalkers are the only beings a Xiticix Killer will attack with the slightest provocation.

Coalition Psi-Stalkers

& "Civilized" Mercenary Psi-Stalkers

Attribute Requirements: None. A high M.E. and P.P. are suggested but not required. Roll 3D6 for each of the eight attributes as normal plus bonuses listed under the *Special Powers and Abilities of the Psi-Stalker*. Some skills may provide additional attribute bonuses.

R.C.C. Skills: The civilized Stalker has undergone some formal education and basic military training. Also see natural abilities.

Speaks American and one other language at 96%.

Radio Basic (+10%)

Pilot Hovercraft (+10%)

Robot Combat: Basic

Read Sensory Equipment (+10%)

Weapon Systems (+10%)

Body Building

Climbing (+5%)

Running

Prowl (+10%)

W.P. Energy Pistol

W.P. Energy Rifle

W.P. two of choice

Hand to Hand Expert

Hand to Hand: Expert can be increased to Assassin if the character is Anarchist or evil, and at the cost of one R.C.C. related skill.

R.C.C. Related Skills: At first level the character can select four "other" skills, plus one new skill at levels 2, 5, 9 and 13. **Note:** Even "civilized" Psi-Stalkers rarely care much about learning to read or higher education.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any (+5%)

Electrical: Basic only (+5%)

Espionage: Tracking and Wilderness Survival only.

Mechanical: Basic and Automotive only.

Medical: First Aid only (+5%).

Military: Any (+5%)

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics.

Pilot: Any (+5%)

Pilot Related: Any

Rogue: Any (+5%), except Computer Hacking.

Science: Basic and Advanced Math only.

Technical: Any (+5%), except all Computer skills.



W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any (+5%)

Secondary Skills: The character gets eight Secondary Skills from the list, excluding those marked "None," at level one, and two additional at levels 3, 8 and 12. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonuses listed in parentheses. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: Coalition Psi-Stalker: Coalition "Dead Boy" armor, weapons, equipment, money, and cybernetics are all the same as the *Coalition Grunt*. Plus a few of the Dog Pack special hand to hand weapons such as the Neuro-Mace, Vibro-Knife, and fist spikes.

Standard Equipment: Civilized Mercenary: Coalition "Dead Boy" armor if an ex-soldier, otherwise light or heavy Mega-Damage armor (probably the latter), a couple sets of clothing, sleeping bag, back pack, extra sack or pack for stowing equipment, utility/ammo-belt, canteen, sunglasses or tinted goggles, air filter or gas mask, and personal items.

Weapons will include a knife or two, two energy or heavy weapons and 1D6 ammo-clips for each, plus one non-energy weapon; player's choice. Vehicle is limited to nonmilitary means of transportation, and may include hover vehicles or a souped-up hovercycle, motorcycle or car — they like to go fast.

Money: The mercenary starts out with 6D6x100 in credit and 4D4x1000 in sellable black market items. Note that Psi-Stalkers can often make big dollars as exterminators in areas plagued by supernatural beings, magic, or psychics.

Coalition Troopers get the same benefits and pay as the Coalition Grunt, plus special hazardous duty pay and bonuses for jobs well done. Those assigned to the ISS make the same as an ISS Inspector and CS Psi-Officers who lead a Dog Pack are treated and paid the same as a low ranking CS Military Specialist.

Cybernetics: Starts with none. Tend to avoid implants in favor of natural powers.

Wild Psi-Stalkers

Wild Psi-Stalkers are human-looking, except that they have no (natural) body hair and are rather aggressive and predatory in nature and chosen lifestyle. They are human mutants who appeared early on in the (approximate) two centuries of the Dark Ages. They are a fierce, brave, tribal people usually encountered in the wilderness and among the ruins of ancient cities. Fifty percent are cannibals who eat part of their victims and/or tear them to shreds. The act of cannibalism, or unnecessary violence, is a manifestation of their predatory killing instinct and aggression, because Psi-Stalkers have minimal need for nourishment from solid foods. Even those occasional Psi-Stalkers who live along a ley line, where P.P.E. is available without killing, are instinctively driven to hunt for living prey. The Coalition scientists hypothesize that the Psi-Stalker is an evolutionary answer to the proliferation of psychic and magic creatures on Earth. No one really knows how these humans became something more (or less depending on how one looks at things) than human.

With rare exceptions, they *never* hunt or kill a fellow Psi-Stalker, but they do engage in friendly and not so friendly competitions, feuds and vendettas with rival tribes and clans.

Furthermore, most Wild Psi-Stalkers consider their Coalition counterparts and any “civilized” Psi-Stalker, to be weaklings and sissies — even cowards. Wild ones love to chide and insult CS Stalkers whenever they encounter them, and generally regard them as an unlikable rival tribe rather than outright enemies. Part of this reaction is jealousy, because the CS Psi-Stalkers have an easier life and fun toys like environmental body armor, Vibro-Blades and guns without having to steal, kill or barter for them. Likewise, “civilized” Psi-Stalkers tend to regard their wild kin as barbarians and troublesome riffraff beneath their notice.

Whether socialized or wild, Psi-Stalkers tend to be very primal beings who are aggressive, strong-willed, emotional and combat oriented. Consequently, encounters between Wild and civilized Psi-Stalkers almost always result in contests of one-upmanship, threats, steely-eyed stares, brawls, fire-fights and sometimes, bloodshed.

Even the most intelligent and socialized Psi-Stalker is rarely literate, so it’s not surprising that only one out of 20,000 Wild Psi-Stalkers will have some understanding of the written word. Most are interested in skills that are physical in nature or deal with piloting, scouting, weapons or combat. This is doubly true with Wild Psi-Stalkers. They have much less formal education than most “civilized” ones, having spent nearly all of their time living in the wild and learning to hunt humanoids and supernatural prey. The typical Wild Psi-Stalker is cunning, sneaky, selfish, and silent; often a solitary hunter (loner) who uses his powers and fighting abilities rather than skills and machines, with the exception of weapons.

Lone Star Tribes. The clans in the Pecos Empire are among the most savage and murderous on the continent. This may be a response to the high level of competition from bandits and other intelligent life forms (in the Psi-Stalkers’ minds they have stepped up to the challenge), not to mention the presence of large monsters, mutants, the CS and other dangers. Nobody knows with certainty how many Wild Psi-Stalkers consider Lone Star their homeland, but CS estimates place their number at around 200,000. Wild Psi-Stalkers in the State of Lone Star are most numerous around the Haunted Ruins of Dallas, The Bend and along the Rio Grande River (where they prey extensively on vampires).

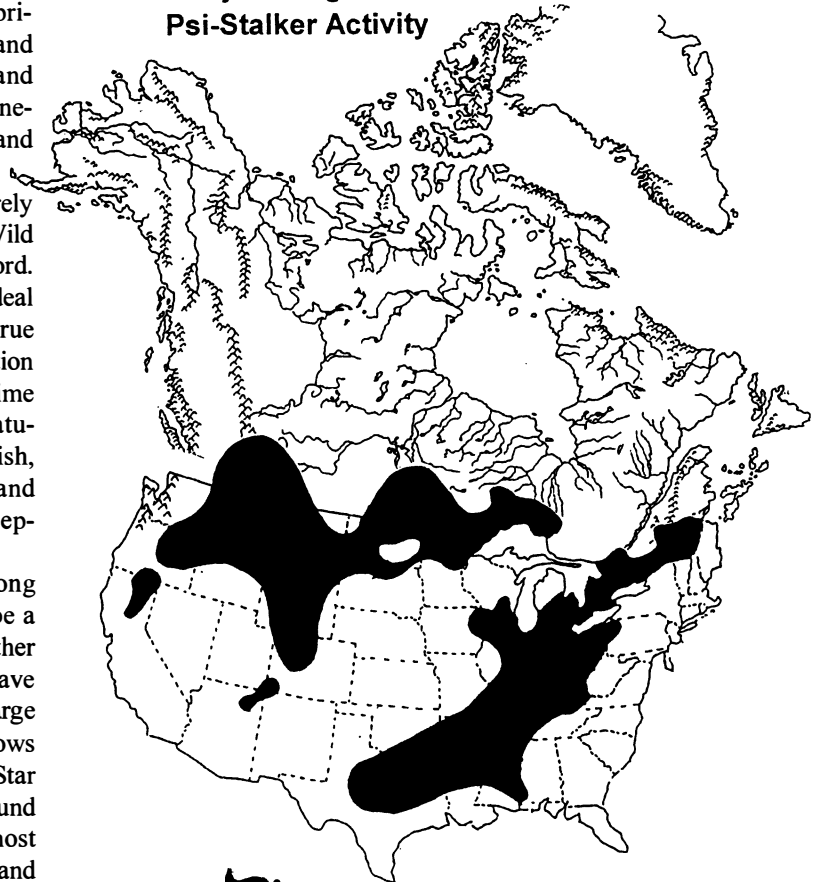
The Northern Tribes. The Canadian and northern US tribes tend to be more fun-loving and gregarious, in a barbaric, rough and tumble sort of way. In this part of the country, they are the dominant power with hundreds of thousands wandering the open wilderness. Likewise, the Xiticix and a large number of supernatural beings who also exist in the Canadian wilderness, provide the Wild Psi-Stalkers ample P.P.E. rich prey to stalk and kill. This is why many people wonder (and some fear) what the Wild Psi-Stalkers will do if all the Xiticix, their primary food source/prey, are destroyed.

The northern tribes are believed to number around a half million, give or take 150,000 or so. As a rule, they get along well with humans, tolerate the presence of the *Coalition Military* (mainly because they have not tried to take their hunting grounds and also battle the Xiticix, an admirable quality), and consider the *Tundra Rangers* to be valiant warriors and friends to all people. They also get along well with Native Americans, although they frequently regard the larger tribes and clans as rivals. As a rule, Wild Psi-Stalkers prefer large, forested expanses of wilder-

ness, so they are rarely encountered north of the tundra any time of the year. The only exceptions are war parties (1D6+6 to 1D4x10+12 members strong) hunting a particular enemy or prey. Loup Garou, for example, are one of the Stalkers’ arch-enemies.

Generally speaking, Wild Psi-Stalkers frequently join bandits, woodsmen/hunters/trappers and adventurer groups, especially if the group is predominantly human. They are also fascinated with *Cyber-Knights* and often join or assist them on their crusades, although most Psi-Stalkers are too undisciplined to become one.

Major Ranges of Psi-Stalker Activity



Major Simvan Ranges

These mutants can also be found as lone individuals, pairs and in small groups (1D4+2) throughout most of North America, including Canada and the wilds of Mexico, and in small to medium clans (2D6x10 to 1D6x100) in Arkansas, Louisiana, the Magic Zone and the Eastern Forests. They are least common in the American southwest and Canadian Northlands (one tenth as many), but their numbers are increasing dramatically in the

Northwest, particularly in and around the old Canadian Province of Calgary (lots of Rift activity and supernatural beings to stalk). As noted, they also have a large presence in the American Midwest and eastern Canada, particularly Manitoba and southwestern Ontario.

Wild Psi-Stalker R.C.C.

Attribute Requirements: None. A high M.E. and P.P. are suggested but not required. Roll 3D6 for each of the eight attributes as normal plus bonuses listed under the *Special Powers and Abilities of the Psi-Stalker*. Some skills may provide additional attribute bonuses.

R.C.C. Skills of Wild Psi-Stalkers: Also see natural abilities.

Speaks American at 90% efficiency. Most speak in low, guttural tones, and have a habit of grunting and growling.

Language: Two other languages of choice at 70% proficiency.

Detect Ambush (+5%)

Escape Artist (+5%)

Prowl (+10%)

Climbing (+5%)

Horsemanship (15%)

Horsemanship: Exotic animals (+15%)

Land Navigation (+10%)

Tracking (humanoids, not animals, +10%)

Wilderness Survival (+30%)

W.P. Three ancient of choice

W.P. Two modern of choice (including energy weapons).

Hand to Hand: Basic

Hand to Hand: Basic can be increased to Expert at the cost of one R.C.C. related skill or Assassin for two.

R.C.C. Related Skills: At first level, the character can select four "other" skills, plus one new skill at levels 5 and 10. **Note:** Most Wild Psi-Stalkers care nothing about learning to read or higher education.

Communications: Radio Basic and Scrambler only (+5%).

Domestic: Any (+5%)

Electrical: None

Espionage: None

Mechanical: None

Medical: First Aid and Holistic Medicine only (+5%).

Military: None

Physical: Any (+5% where applicable)

Pilot: Any (+5%), except power armor, bots and military vehicles.

Pilot Related: Any

Rogue: Any (+5%), except Computer Hacking.

Science: Basic Math only.

Technical: Any (+5%), except all Computer Skills.

W.P.: Any

Wilderness: Any (+10%)

Secondary Skills: The character gets five Secondary Skills from the list, excluding those marked "None," at level one, and three additional at levels 3, 8 and 12. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonuses listed in parentheses. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level.

Standard Equipment: May or may not wear clothing, usually wear Mega-Damage body armor, and have a backpack, a couple of sacks, utility/ammo-belt, gun holster, sunglasses or tinted goggles, air filter or gas mask, and personal items.

Weapons will include a couple of (S.D.C.) knives and/or Vibro-Blades, and four other weapons of choice. They love Vibro-Blades, rapid-fire energy weapons, and magic weapons, but don't start with anything magical.

Vehicles are limited to a good quality horse or other riding animal mount (has an affinity with all *non-predatory* animals, including alien animals), or non-military vehicle (may include hover vehicles or souped-up hovercycle, motorcycle or car). May use a Techno-Wizard vehicle too, but not to start with.

Allies and Enemies: Most Psi-Stalkers regard all other Psi-Stalkers and humans as being "kin," and are usually willing to trust and befriend them. Psi-Stalkers usually feel a closeness and friendship toward the intelligent mutant animals, especially Dog Boys, and other beings who are tough, strong and/or close to nature.

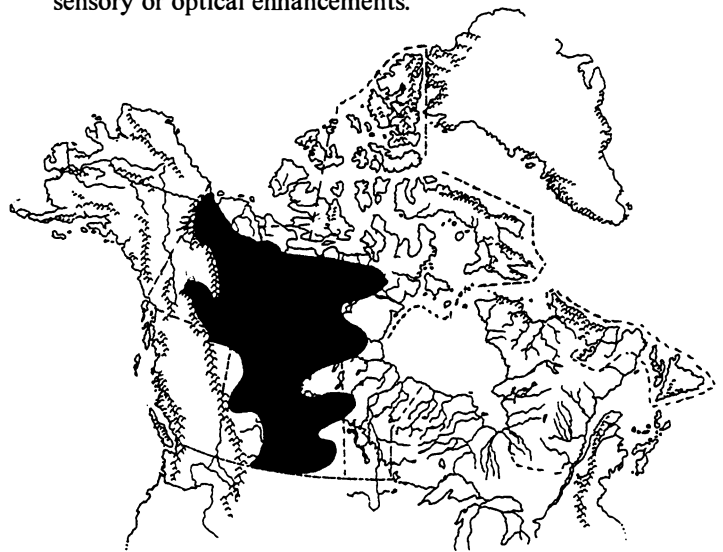
The rivalry and ongoing war between the Pecos Empire Psi-Stalkers and the Simvan Monster Riders has spread to the northern tribes where they engage in frequent feuds and vendettas. For the time being, these battles are not as bloody and savage as those in Lone Star (which can be pure carnage), but they are becoming more intense. For whatever reason, it is the Monster Riders who usually initiate these conflicts.

Most other races, including most D-Bees, and such powerful beings as Groat Hunters, Grackle Tooth, Mastadonoids, Vanguard Brawlers and other D-Bees, are viewed with suspicion and disdain. Meanwhile, *all* supernatural creatures are regarded as natural enemies, as are many creatures of magic.

A note about Simvan: These tribal nomads have no liking for the Xiticix, but honestly don't encounter them much. Except for occasional raids and treks to the east, most Simvan live and hunt in the western United States and Canada, away from the Xiticix and human kingdoms. The increasing animosity between them and Psi-Stalkers does not help matters. Consequently, other than an occasional individual or small group, Simvan are not likely to be found among the Xiticix fighters.

Money: The character starts out with no credit and 4D6x1000 in sellable Black Market items.

Cybernetics: Starts with none. Tends to avoid implants in favor of natural powers. If cybernetics are used, they are usually sensory or optical enhancements.



Region Patrolled by Tundra Rangers

Avenues of Adventure



The following are some settings and ideas for adventures and even campaigns player characters can enjoy against the Xiticix. Most adventure ideas are presented in the Hook, Line & Sinker™ (HLS) style.

Hook, Line & Sinker™ Adventure Outlines

What is a Hook, Line & Sinker™?

Hook, Line & Sinker™ are short outlines for adventure or adventure ideas. The concept behind them is to provide just enough information to spark the G.M.'s creative energies so he or she can develop his/her own adventure, or even campaign, tailored to his or her specific group of players. Hook, Line, and Sinker are a great way to present numerous ideas that the Game Master can run with. HLS adventure outlines also come in handy when the Game Master has nothing else prepared, but finds the player group has outpaced him and his prepared adventure suddenly ends. What to do next, how about improvise with an HLS?

How HLS Work

Hook: The current situation or location of the adventuring party.

Line: An opportunity for adventure that presents itself to the player characters. A line is normally presented as a short paragraph. Think of the line as the "bait" to lure the group into an adventure.

Sinker: The clincher to the line. The sinker presents the Game Master with a dilemma that makes the situation a true adventure, and often presents an unexpected twist.

The first set of adventure ideas are designed for a variety of non-war based encounters and conflict. They are followed by ideas and suggestions for an all-out war against the Xiticix.

Defend the Mark

Hook: A Non-Player Character (NPC) or player character has an unexpected encounter with a lone Hunter and is "sprayed" by him before the creature flies away. The character who has been sprayed may know what it means or finds out from someone in the adventurer group, his community or passerby. What it means is that a band of Xiticix will be coming for him, to capture, take to the Hive Network and turn into Sludge.

This individual can be an oracle/psychic, shaman, healer, practitioner of magic, human, D-Bee or any character with 20 or more P.P.E. There should probably be something about the individual that makes him or her special, important or sympathetic, or why else would the group be willing to risk its own collective neck to help? He/she/they could be a beloved member of the community, a sweet helpless child, pregnant woman, kindly old lady, an aging hero too feeble to defend himself, the head of a tribe or community, the holder of an important secret or ability, and so on.

It can also be fun to make the victim a despicable puke too. He could be a spoiled and unscrupulous businessman, thief, con-artist, CS officer, CS informer/spy/lackey, a member of the Black Market or other type of criminal, despot ruler, slaver, spoiled and

obnoxious aristocrat, mage or politician, or any number of scoundrel types. Perhaps even a character the player group has encountered in the past. Whatever and whoever this character may be, he or she has a pile of credits or information or desperately needed service he can provide that makes trying to save his wretched neck worth doing, or even a necessary evil.

Line: The player characters decide to protect this important, likeable, respected or innocent character. The "marked" individual may have come to them asking (perhaps willing to pay or trade) for their help, or player characters of good alignment (or with ulterior motives) may have *volunteered* to protect him/her.

Sinker: Within 1D4 days, 1D4+3 Leapers or 1D4+1 Warriors and one Hunter will come to collect "the mark." They will battle to the death. If other Xiticix are within a four mile (6.4 km) radius, 1D6+6 will come to investigate the *Death Scent* of their brethren. They are probably all Warriors (01-70%) or a mixed group of Warriors with 1D4 Leapers or Hunters (71-00%). They will attack those they believe responsible for the deaths of their fellows, fighting to the death. They will also recognize the scent of the Hunter's Mark and, if possible, try to abduct the marked individual.

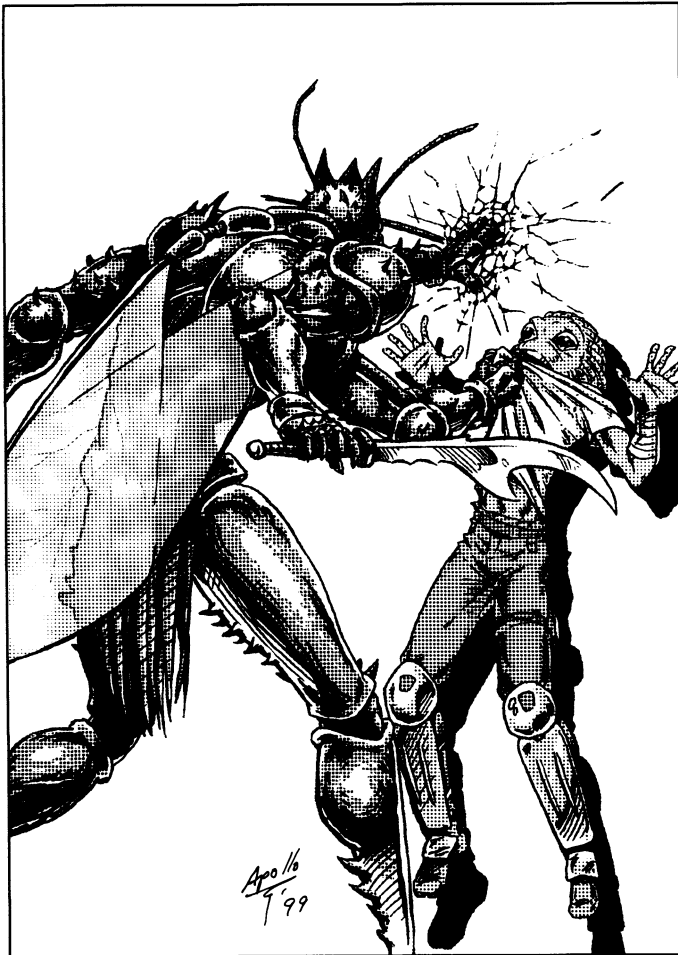
Assuming the first wave or two of Xiticix, as described above, are defeated, the group can expect another within 1D4 days. This group will be composed of 1D4 Warriors, two Leapers and a Hunter.

1D6 days after this group, the final retrieval team will come searching for "the mark" and looking for revenge against those responsible for destroying the earlier teams. This group consists of one Super-Warrior, two Hunters, 1D4 Leapers and 1D4 Warriors.

If the characters have been able to get the "marked" individual at least 100 miles (160 km) away, these marauding Xiticix will not find him and this confrontation won't happen. Likewise, if the group finds away to wash the marking scent off the victim, the confrontation won't happen. However, if the G.M. is feeling particularly mischievous, these Xiticix might not leave until they find 1-3 *replacements*, i.e. some other innocent person(s) with high P.P.E. or maybe even one or two of the player characters.

Note: In all instances the Game Master should adjust the size of the antagonists to best accommodate his player group and the situation. Unless the G.M. has some plan, like capturing all or some of the player characters and taking them to the Hive (where they have to escape and either learn something valuable or rescue somebody along the way), or capturing the marked NPC, forcing the group to try to invade the hive or to get them into trouble, the attacking monsters should be roughly equivalent in size and power to the player group. **For example:** One Xiticix per player character may be ideal. If the group is weak or composed mostly of first level characters then maybe there should be one monster for every two player characters. If the adventurers are high level or armed to the teeth, perhaps there should be 1.5 or two Xiticix for every player character, or one each, but include more formidable and varied foes, such as the mix of Super-Warrior, Hunters, Leapers and Warriors suggested above.

When appropriate, the G.M. can introduce a character, hero, group or even the cavalry (Cyber-Knights, Tundra Rangers, Lazlo Troops, CS troops, a rival band of adventurers) to *save* the player characters. This tactic should be used very sparingly, for dramatic effect and to progress or add to the story. **For example:** If the rescuers are *CS troops* or *a rival band* of adventurers, or



heroes, or mercenaries, they are likely to make fun of the player characters and spread the word of their mistakes, failures and inadequacies. (“Yeah, they were dead meat until we showed up and pulled their fat outta the fire. Geez, what even made you guys think you could take them on?” Followed by laughs, jokes and jabs.) If Cyber-Knights, Tundra Rangers, Lazlo soldiers or other heroic figures are involved, the player group may lose their confidence or respect, or be looked upon poorly as loose cannons or incompetent fools. On the other hand, any of these groups might regard them as courageous heroes (or fools who can be duped) and try to recruit them to their cause or for a special mission; a nice segue into the next adventure.

G.M. intervention to “save a player group” should always have a price or ramifications of some kind. Furthermore, such intervention can not become a crutch in which the players get lazy and expect the G.M. to save their characters time and time again. This is a violent game with a war setting. Characters *will die*. It is inevitable. Sometimes half to the entire group may perish — um, to coin a famous phrase, “Remember the Alamo,” one of the most amazing battles against overwhelming odds in American history. A battle where numerous renowned heroes perished, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie and William Trais among them. Heroes and soldiers die. Sometimes they die heroically, sometimes foolishly (remember General Custer?) and other times through tragedy and betrayal. It is *not* the job of the G.M. to rescue the player characters. In fact, a heroic death/self-sacrifice or act of betrayal can motivate and galvanize a group. And, personally, if a character is stupid, ignores the hints and warnings of the G.M. and finds himself at the business end of a gun or sword, it's his own fault. Maybe, he'll be more careful with his next charac-

ter. And don't forget, this is a game, the characters are fictional, so when one character dies, a new one can be “rolled up” and worked back into the game.

Just some friendly G.M. tips as we get going.

A Warrior's Death

Hook: A Super-Warrior or pair of Hunters, Leapers or Warriors have been severely crippled in a recent battle. At least one, if not both antennae are gone, 1D4+2 eyes are permanently destroyed, the wings are (temporarily) shredded and a foot or foot and leg is crushed or missing — a resin peg-leg or shaft of wood or metal tied to the upper leg takes its place.

Line: Rather than volunteer to be made into “Sludge,” this eternal soldier(s) has decided to die fighting.

Sinker: Lucky you, your group has been chosen as the ones to end its (their) misery. Unfortunately, the horrid creature(s) won't give up the ghost quietly and will fight to the death, taking as many non-Xiticix with it to the grave as it can.

The Queen's Gambit

Hook: Away from the Hivelands, perhaps nowhere near Manitoba or Minnesota, our heroes stumble across (or hear about) one lone Xiticix tower.

Line: Observing it for a while from a safe distance, it seems there is a fair amount of activity. In fact, the tower may still be under construction and the Warriors seem particularly nervous and aggressive. At some point the player group sees a small swarm of six Warriors, a Super-Warrior and four Hunters fly up from over a hill, or trees, cave, or ruins of a city or crashed CS Death's Head Transport. They seem to be flying in some sort of formation and are acting very jumpy. A moment later, a second Super-Warrior appears leading a group of two Leapers, six Nannies and a *young Queen!*

Sinker: The tower is the beginning of a NEW hive! What does the player group do? Further observation shows the Queen and her entourage fly into a large opening near the center of the six story tower. There appears to be less than two dozen Warriors and Workers, a dozen Nannies, a half dozen Leapers and Hunters, and no more than three or four Diggers — a comparatively tiny group. Obviously since the Queen has just arrived, and did not yet exhibit an egg sac, she must be a newborn herself and has no eggs or nits. If somebody (our heroes) acts quickly, this seventh hive could be exterminated before it ever truly gets started!

Note: This adventure could take place at any time before, during or after the Lazlo War against the Xiticix Hivelands. As for the tunnels, they are yet to be developed. All that exists is an 80 foot (24.4 m) drop to a short first level and a tiny second level limited to a Queen's Chamber, small egg chamber and two medium-sized Nurseries. All, including the young Queen, Nannies and Workers are ultra-tense, see all intelligent life forms who come within six miles (9.6 km) as immediate threat and will fight them to the death (so the player group is probably much closer than that already and in danger as they quietly observe this rebirth of a nightmare).

Psi-Stalkers' Day Out

Hook: Our heroes are staying out of trouble and minding their own business when a pack of Psi-Stalkers (any size that works for the G.M.) come running out of the woods.

Line: They pause for a moment, smile, and shout, “Run. Get out of here now. Trust us, you don’t want to be here,” and go running off. Any member of the player group who tries to detain one will get pushed out of the way as the Psi-Stalkers keep shouting things like, “Move it, move it. Scatter. Do it now! Run. Go, go, go!”

There’s not a lot Psi-Stalkers are afraid of, especially if this group has a dozen or more warriors in it. Smart characters should at least take cover or begin to gather their gear when the Psi-Stalkers’ pursuers come crashing through the trees.

Sinker: There are two ways this conflict scenario can go. One is the obvious, in which a large group of Xiticix, probably a Super-Warrior, several Warriors, and/or a few Leapers and/or Hunters among them come swarming after them (at least two Xiticix for every one Psi-Stalker). Obviously, the wild tribesmen took on more than they could handle. Ironically, since our heroes have a different smell and are (presumably) outside of Xiticix territory, the bug men ignore them unless the Psi-Stalkers panic and attack them. If the player characters join the fight to help the Psi-Stalkers, they will have a serious battle on their hands, but the band of mutants will join the battle and, if the united group of humanoids are successful in destroying or chasing the Xiticix away, the player characters will have earned themselves the gratitude of in these Wild Psi-Stalkers and made new friends and allies for life.

Alternate, surprise scenario #1: It is not Xiticix that come chasing after the Wild Psi-Stalkers, but 1D4+2 *Xiticix Killers!* The cunning Psi-Stalkers have used the scent gland of a slain Hunter to cover themselves in the Colony Identification Scent of the local hive. Unfortunately, this has caused a rare pack of Xiticix Killers to mistake them for Xiticix. There is no reasoning with these frightening natural predators, so they are trying to out-run them. The Psi-Stalkers will fight only when the Killers catch up to them, which will be soon. Without help from the player group, the Xiticix Killers will slaughter them. The catch is, the Xiticix Killers will ignore the player group unless they are attacked by them, at which point they will fight them also. The Xiticix Killers fight until two of them are slain, at which point the rest will retreat in search of easier prey.

Alternate, surprise scenario #2: It turns out that these Psi-Stalkers are raiders and bandits whose latest victim turned out to be more than they could handle. Thus, their pursuers could be a squad of Coalition soldiers, a band of mercenaries, a group of Simvan Monster Riders (on monsters), a pack of 3-5 angry Loup Garou or other demons, an angry dragon or even Lazlo troops. In this case, their pursuers will pause at the sight of the player group as they try to quickly assess whether our heroes are part of “the gang” and party to an ambush, or what. Unless the group attacks them, they can avoid a battle. In fact, these characters might ask, “Which way did they go?” and one, some or all, may stay behind to talk to or question the player characters. With any luck, trouble can be avoided and the group can enjoy an exchange of information. Note that angry Simvan, demons or a dragon are likely to forego any peaceful exchange and attack the group at the slightest provocation.

The Xiticix did it

Hook: A band of evildoers engage in raiding, pillaging and mayhem. All are Diabolic and Miscreant with no regard for life other than their own. A mixture of races, technology and magic.

Line: After they capture a community, they engage in torture, rape and pillage, then raze it to the ground, slaughter all inhabitants and leaving the carcass of a slain Xiticix or two and other evidence to suggest it was the handiwork of the Xiticix. A convenient cover story to conceal their own heinous crimes, and it has worked. So far, nobody alive knows they even exist. They’ve already killed hundreds, mostly D-Bees, and there is no end in sight. They also target vulnerable bands of travelers, adventurers and even Coalition and Lazlo soldiers.

Sinker: The player characters have somehow learned about these fiends and stumble upon information indicating their next target (or two). Only our heroes can (try to) save these unsuspecting, innocent people from becoming these raiders’ next victims. If the opposition is too stiff, the raiders *will* retreat and flee, but only after a terrible battle and desperate and despicable measures. They won’t quit easily (will return and use treachery and deception to destroy those who oppose them), because they don’t want their gravy train to end, nor be identified and hunted for their crimes. Even if the band is destroyed, a handful (perhaps the leader) will slip away and escape, however, they will fear their secret is out and seek revenge on those who have opposed them, meaning both the village and the player characters become targets.

Note: This scenario can take place before and during the Big War, and may take place with more than one group of bad guys. War tends to bring out the best and *worst* in people.

Ghost Town

Hook: The adventurer group discovers a small, run-down, low-tech ghost town. It may have once been a trading post, farm, village or full-fledged town that either fell upon hard times or has been deserted because of the increased Xiticix aggression and/or impending war.

Line: It looks like as good a place as any to camp for the night. At least a few buildings or homes have a solid roof and working fireplace. Looking around, the place seems completely empty, and there are no hostile forces in the neighborhood.

Sinker: Sometime during the night, the town gets more visitors. This can be a Xiticix Hunting Party (1D4 Hunters accompanied by 1D6 Leapers) or a standard Xiticix Patrol of 1D6+2 Warriors and one Hunter or Super-Warrior.

Alternative #1: The town may be deserted by the original occupants, but it is used by a band of Xiticix-fighting Wild Psi-Stalkers, mercenaries, Lazlo fighters, or CS troops as a secret base camp. There is a hidden cache of weapons and supplies under the floor of one of the buildings (where the player characters are staying, perhaps) and the group considers this town “theirs.” Consequently, they are not happy to find intruders there. Depending on how the player characters conduct themselves, there does not have to be a gunfight, although they may be forced to leave. Diplomacy is necessary to get this group (large or small) to let them spend the night or even the next few days. If all goes well (CS troops and some mercs may not like having D-Bees or practitioners of magic in town), the player group and the rival

NPC group may share stories, news, information, or food and even trade goods or offer help to one another.

This little “encounter” can end peacefully and pleasantly with both parties departing the next morning, or an altercation may arise (cheating at gambling, theft, practical joke) that could escalate into major trouble.

Something else to consider: This NPC group is actively involved in battling Xiticix, which means they could be accidentally carrying the Death or Trail Scent of the Xiticix with them. A trail the monsters could have followed. If so, an attack will come during the night or early the next morning. Does the adventure group stay and fight alongside the non-Player Characters? This isn't trouble the player group made — or is it? Perhaps it is the player group the Xiticix have followed. If so, the NPC group will stand at their side and help to fight the Xiticix, but they will be extremely angry that these “incompetent fools” led the enemy to their secret camp. Now that Xiticix were slain in town, it is ruined as a base camp, because other Xiticix will investigate and probably tear it down (standard procedure for the insect aliens).

Alternative #2: Bandits, demons, or other non-Xiticix bad guys arrive to investigate the town in search of easy victims or looking to camp there themselves. Maybe these brigands can be avoided or a truce made (time to trade information and/or goods).

Alternative #3: The town's not really deserted, there's a trap door in 1-3 of the buildings leading to a simple underground hideout where the few remaining townspeople (no more than 20) are hiding. They still live in part of the town and hide whenever any strangers are spotted. The problem is, they've just been discovered by a Xiticix Patrol (or other evildoers). The player characters are blissfully ignorant of all this (including the arrival of dangerous forces) until the air is split by screams and the sound of a gun. Do they help these people or do they slip out of town unseen?

Lazlo vs the Xiticix

This is it, the war against the Xiticix. The systematic campaign of extermination by the people of Lazlo and whatever allies are willing to join them in their crusade. They are going with “Plan A: Queen Check” — the extermination of all the Queens to prevent further Xiticix expansion. This will be followed by the destruction of the eggs, nits, grubs, and Nannies (the only other females of the Xiticix race, just to play it safe). Along the way they plan (and will probably need) to terminate 40-50% of the fighting class Xiticix, with an emphasis on Super-Warriors and Hunters. The hope is that by slaying the Queens and other hive leaders, the survivors will be impotent, offer minimal danger to non-Xiticix life forms and quietly live out the rest of their natural lives. Meanwhile the Xiticix race slowly disappears. Without Queens they are unable to procreate, and should be erased from the face of the Earth within a hundred years.

To implement this plan, the Lazlo forces will start by positioning their forces in and around the Hivelands, creating six specific “armies” to tackle each of the Xiticix Hive Colonies. Each Army Division will include virtually all types of *Men at Arms*,

Adventurers/Scholars, Practitioners of Magic and Psychics — at least to some degree or another. Inevitably, some of these Lazlo troops will be better prepared and experienced than others. Likewise, there will be some imbalance of magic, with some divisions having a larger or stronger amount of magical resources (practitioners of magic, healers, dragons, Elementals, Techno-

Wizard weapons, other magic items, etc.) than others who may have minimal magic resources (i.e. inexperienced mages, more men at arms than spell casters, few magic weapons, etc.).

It is important to realize that at least half (50%) of the Lazlo fighters (“soldiers” seems an inappropriate term) have little to no formal training in the arts of combat. The average level of these volunteers, be they Juicer, Headhunter, Operator, Rogue Scholar, Ley Line Walker or dragon, is 1st to 3rd level! About 35% are reasonably experienced at levels 4-6, with an additional 10% ranging from 7th to 9th. A paltry 5% are 10th level or higher. Many of the characters who are 7th level and higher serve as squad leaders, officers, commanders, advisors and elite teams (including “Queen Killers”).

Typical Breakdown of Lazlo Troops

The following is a common breakdown of the “formal” Lazlo Forces by general O.C.C. types. The common level of half the troops is 1-3. Total number of Lazlo troops and allies: 290,000 to 400,000; 33-40% of which will be Psi-Stalkers. The six Army Divisions will each have approximately 60,000 troops, 18-25% of which will be Psi-Stalkers.

Thousands of additional Psi-Stalkers battle the Xiticix as part of the war effort, but do so on their own terms and refuse to participate in coordinated military efforts. Most Wild Psi-Stalkers are anarchist by nature and do not function well within a rigid military structure.

1% Cyborgs

1% Crazies

2% Juicers

4% Headhunters

12% Military Soldiers: Grunt/Soldier/Warriors, including various types of Tundra Rangers, Civilized Psi-Stalkers, mercenaries (various types), bandits, gunfighters, and adventurers.

2% Military: Officers/Elite Special Forces, including O.C.C.s like Gunslingers, Bounty Hunters, etc.

2% Military: Power Armor and Robot Pilots

1% Body Fixers/Healers

2% City Rats

2% Operators

5% Rogue Scholars

2% Rogue Scientists

8% Vagabonds

15% Wilderness Scouts or Woodsmen/Trappers, including Native Americans, Psi-Stalkers and D-Bees.

16% Wild Psi-Stalkers

2% Dragons (most are Hatchlings at levels 3-7; 10% are adults, 2% ancient dragons).

6% Ley Line Walkers

4% Mystics

4% Techno-Wizards

5% Psychics (various)

1.5% Others: Magic (various: Temporal Warriors and Wizards, Tattooed Men, Druids, Warlocks, Conjurers, Magi, Shamans, Mystic Warriors, etc.)

2.5% Others



Breaux!

Note: Cyber-Knights and most other O.C.C.s and R.C.C.s are too few to list as a percentage and fall into “others.” At best there are two dozen Cyber-Knights in the fight, same with Glitter Boys and rogue Dog Boys. Uncommon and exotic O.C.C.s and R.C.C.s will seldom have more than a dozen and never more than 50 total.

Necromancers and Witches are not part of the official Lazlo forces. Likewise, only select and trusted Shifters/Summoners are part of the troops.

Remember, the cream of the combat troops, mercenaries and adventurers are locked in combat at Free Quebec and Tolkeen, fighting against the Coalition Army. The Federation of Magic has no love for the Kingdom of Lazlo, whom they consider to be rivals and traitors because they often challenge and openly defy or castigate the Federation.

Plan of attack

- First, Xiticix patrols and reconnaissance squads are to be eradicated whenever possible, provided such an attack will not provoke a Xiticix army into combat.
- Second, the Queens will be targeted for extermination. The hard part is locating them, as no two hives are exactly alike, and teleporting into the unknown is a quick way to die.

Once twenty or more Queens are found, several *Surgical Strike Teams* known as “Queen Killers” will make a series of coordinated attacks. The Strike Force will be armed with conventional weapons and powerful magic, with a (6th level+ hatchling, occasionally an adult) dragon and powerful mage (6th level or higher) as part of every team, along with other mages, psychics and warriors. “Queen Killer” Strike Teams

will range in size from 6-24 diverse members; size depending on the anticipated amount of the opposition and the raw power of the Strike Force members. It is believed that a small team that can magically get in, strike and exit via the same magic, will have the best chance of success. Since the goal is to exterminate the Queen, the majority of the group works to contain and hold off her protectors, while 2-4 teammates blast the Queen to kingdom come. They are also expected to cover the backsides of the teammates battling the Queen, so they can strike without regard for their own safety. It is a daring and deadly proposition even when the attack goes well.

- Third, if the opportunity presents itself, Queen Killer squads can turn their attacks against Nannies, eggs, nits and grubs, provided the Queen has already been eliminated and they are not jeopardizing their own lives. Experienced Queen Killers are important for the continued success of the entire military operation. Remember, there are six *known* Xiticix colonies, each with an estimated 70-100 Queens. That’s 420 to 600 Queens, not counting any “replacements” that may crop up out of the grubs nearing adulthood (young Queens can be replaced at a rate of 1D4x10 every four to six months).
- Fourth, locate Nurseries and Egg Chambers for future targeting (within 24 hours, often within the hour, either by the same group who struck the Queen or a second team). The eggs, nits and grubs must be exterminated before the Nannies and other defenders realize they are in danger and move them to a different (safer and hidden) location. These vital places are typically located near, sometimes next door to, the Queen’s Chamber. Bombardment and a scorched earth approach is taken against these locations, with everything in the chamber



targeted for destruction. Area effect magic, energy magic, Elementals, and conventional explosives, missiles and weaponry are used to atomize everything inside. A veritable frenzy of destruction.

- Fifth, when all or most of the Queens are eliminated, the Nannies are to be tracked down and exterminated, along with any Xiticix who get in the way.
- Sixth, containment of the Xiticix and protection of innocent people. Actually, this will be done throughout the campaign. The people of Lazlo fear the retaliation and reaction of the Xiticix Warriors to this formidable onslaught on their Queens and young, and are concerned that thousands of innocent people living near the Hivelands may suffer from Xiticix retaliation. The Lazlo forces hope to minimize this by actively defending locals and escorting some people to a safer locale. Unfortunately, they greatly underestimate the immensity of this task.

Without a doubt, the Xiticix will become and remain highly agitated. As a result, Lazlo analysts believe they are likely to reach a zero tolerance for non-Xiticix and begin to slaughter any humanoid found within Xiticix territory. In addition, it is believed they will not only double air and ground border patrols, but extend their active border from ten miles (16 km) to 30-40 miles (48 to 64 km).

G.M. Note: The Lazlo experts are wrong about this. The Xiticix will increase their patrols by tenfold and extend their borders by 80-100 miles (128.7 to 160 km). They are correct about the Xiticix going on the warpath, slaughtering entire villages and attacking all humanoids within their extended borders. However, the dramatically large scale will make it incredibly difficult to cope with and stretch the already strained Lazlo Armies near their breaking point. This will increase the anticipated casualties of Lazlo troops from an estimated 15-20% to 30-35%, and casualties among innocent, non-Military personnel from an estimated 10% to a horrifying 45-50%! Many of them Psi-Stalkers and D-Bees.

Moreover, after more than 50% of the original Queens and/or eggs, nits and grubs are lost, each colony will remain on a constant state of alert. They will zoom about in swarms like angry bees protecting their hive from the slightest threat of danger, especially, humanoids encountered within the 100 mile (160 km) zone. This will include the entire upper half of Minnesota, most of North Dakota, the lower half of Manitoba and the southwestern quarter of Ontario up to Hudson Bay, as well as the skies over the western half of Lake Superior, making lake travel in the region extremely dangerous. Note that the Xiticix will respect the borders of rival hive colonies, at least for now, and will not attack their fellow Xiticix while they are being ravaged by hostile aliens (i.e. the humans and D-Bees of Lazlo).

- Seventh, after every known young Queen, Elder Queen, Nanny, egg, nit and grub has been eradicated, the Lazlo armed forces will prepare for mass retaliation and collateral damage control. They don't know how the Xiticix will react when all Queens and young are destroyed. If they spill into the countryside, the Lazlo troops must be ready to deal with it. Consequently, there continues to be talk about leaving one or two young Queens till the very end to prevent the Xiticix massing into swarms of hundreds of thousands seeking revenge against humanoid life before the army is ready.

- Eighth, clean up, rescue and retreat. Once they have accomplished their agenda, effectively neutering the Xiticix race on Earth, and the worst of the Xiticix retaliation has come to pass, the Lazlo force will return home.

Lazlo's military minds estimate that the entire campaign will take ten to eighteen months, about the same length of time the Coalition States expects is necessary to obliterate the Kingdom of Tolkeen.

- Ninth, maintain surveillance and continued extermination of Queens and their spawn before they mature into adults. As is the case of any insect infestation, one must exterminate all the eggs, young and egg layers. If even one Queen survives, the war will have been for naught, and the infestation will reoccur. As a safeguard, they will dispatch reconnaissance teams and sweeper squads to observe the surviving Xiticix and to eliminate any eggs, Queens and Nannies that may be discovered (escaped the carnage of the war or were born afterward). **Note:** The Lazlo observers and exterminators will get an unexpected and indirect helping hand from the Coalition Military who will also constantly monitor the Xiticix and dispatch termination squads whenever a new Queen is suspected. Furthermore, they are likely to increase their own campaign against the surviving Xiticix, wiping out one hive colony at a time and destroying their towers and tunnels. See the section on the Coalition elsewhere in this book.

The start of the War

All six Army Divisions are supposed to launch their branches of **Operation Queen Check** in unison, but the odds of that being successful is slim (at least one or two are likely to experience unexpected delays and problems).

Player characters should be one of the special squads charged with special operations, rescues, raids, and intelligence gathering; perhaps even one of the Queen Killer teams. Special Ops inside the hive includes rescuing fellow soldiers pinned down/trapped inside, finding and destroying Egg and Nursery Chambers, creating diversions, support and rescue of other teams and so on. The war should last for several weeks if not several months of real time, and should include several different adventures of varying size and complexity. Use the following notes, suggestions and Hook, Line and Sinker adventure outlines as a guide. Good luck soldier, you'll need it.

Military Raids

Note: Player characters can be Coalition Troops or hired mercenaries involved in the CS holding action, or advanced scouts or special Strike Force teams from Lazlo. Or they can be CS spies (or even Splugorth spies or hired agents) working undercover as mercs or adventurers assigned to help the war effort, or plain, old wandering adventurers.

Possible Types of Raiding Missions

- **Intelligence Gathering:** See how Xiticix respond to certain threats and situations, map out a hive, locate enemy outposts and operations, identify weaknesses, etc. Such operations may



include going into the hive to map, study, and observe the Xiticix in their natural environment.

- **Seek & Destroy Missions:** Typically military small squad operations involving the targeting of Xiticix scouting and patrol parties and their elimination. May involve ambushes and sniping as well as patrols in the field and into enemy territory.
- **Surgical Strikes:** Small squad operations to full-sized coordinated attacks in which a specific target (place, leader, group or resource) is attacked with the intention of destroying it and limiting the enemy's capabilities. The plan to locate and exterminate the Queens is a surgical attack.
- **Assault on the Hive:** May be considered a suicide mission. Done to cause confusion and hurt the enemy — inflict death and destruction to the enemy and their stronghold. Such raids may be a small squad operation or full-scale attack, or anything in between.
- **Sabotage:** A covert, small squad operation designed to eliminate a particular target (place, leader, group or resource) with the purpose of destroying an enemy resource or causing death, destruction, and confusion among the enemy, or creating a diversion.
- **Abduction:** Such operations may include going into the hive to capture various types of Xiticix, or a nit or grub for scientific study.
- **Field Test:** A raid or military operation designed to test an experimental weapon (magic or conventional) or a theory.

Rescue Missions

Like raids, there are many possible scenarios for a straightforward rescue mission. The bottom line of any "rescue" mission is to track and locate the captives, get them out of the clutches of the Xiticix and safely return them to their home (or authorities or a similar refuge).

- **Rescue Captives.** Little Sammy and Suzy, the nine year old twins (or any individual, pair or small group of children) were abducted by two or more Xiticix Hunters or Leapers. The only thing the Xiticix want with the kids is to turn them into "Sludge." This fundamental plot can be used over and over again with little twists and variations. For example, the captive could be an officer, friend, scientist, etc.
- **Missing in Action.** A field patrol, reconnaissance team, spy, agents or friend has gone missing in enemy or hostile territory. They may be dead, injured, or trapped.

The mission: To locate and extract. Meaning to find out what happened to the team, locate any survivors and either return with the lost men or with evidence to confirm their demise. This can lead to all kinds of adventures along the way, and may not culminate with finding some or all of them; there's still the trek home and the adventures (or not) involved in the return trip that could lead to a grand finale.

- **Crash Landing.** An aircraft or a flying power armor unit has fallen behind enemy lines. A rescue team is sent in to find and extract them before the enemy does. This can lead to a Precision Insertion and Extraction, or be done quietly.
- **Precision Insertion and Extraction.** This is a simple "in and out" operation where a downed or trapped soldier's location is

known. The rescue team can choose to sneak in, but more often than not, they storm in, blitzkrieg style, with weapons blazing, long enough to hold off the enemy, get the trapped individual(s) and get the heck out of there, rescued victims in tow. The enemy is typically crawling all over the place and a fire-fight is usually a certainty, however, they battle only long enough to make the rescue. A large and powerful support unit is usually within 50 miles (80 km) and all the rescuers have to do is get there to be safe (the support unit will destroy or chase away any pursuers).

- **Disaster Rescue and Relief.** This involves rescuing fellow soldiers and civilians from disasters that result from war/combat, sabotage, arson, magic, and accidents, as well as natural disasters such as storms, flooding, mud slides, earthquakes, etc.

Rescues resulting from combat can involve pulling soldiers from the wreckage of a giant robot, tank or vehicle, or out from a collapsed building or debris, collecting injured troops (probably while under fire) and rushing them to get medical treatment, opening up an avenue of retreat for troops pinned by enemy forces, locating and recovering and assisting lost teammates (unconscious, pinned under debris, trapped on the wrong side of the battle-line, etc.), the evacuating and/or escorting of refugees from a war zone, and so on. Likewise, “rescue” may involve the safe removal/acquisition of valuable supplies, food, water, equipment, weapons and so forth.

Note: Lazlo forces will be very concerned with the safety of refugees and innocent people at risk. They will do everything in their power to protect innocent people from the wrath of angry Xiticix who are likely to begin sending patrols and raiding parties against all humanoids within 100 miles (160 km; instead of the usual 10 miles/16 km) of their borders.

Cross-Fire

Hook: A village, tribal clan or group of refugees is packing up and trying to leave the area.

Line: Ironically, before they can leave, or while en route, they get caught between two warring factions: A swarm of dozens, even hundreds of Xiticix battling against a nearly equal number of Lazlo troops, well-meaning mercenaries or Coalition soldiers.

Sinker: These innocent people (perhaps D-Bees, so CS troops couldn’t care less about them) are going to die in the cross-fire unless somebody (the player group) helps them escape and get to safety. The two warring sides will, for the most part, ignore them.

However, our heroes will have to contend with occasional friendly fire, 1-4 rampaging Xiticix who see *all* humanoids as an enemy to be destroyed, and fallen stragglers, injured heroes, and missing children who need to be rescued.

Enemy of a different kind

Hook: The player characters are on some standard mission inside or outside, even away from the Hive Network. Perhaps they hear the sound of combat not too far away, and they go to investigate.

Line: They stumble upon the aftermath of a battle. At first glance it appears a squad of a dozen or two Coalition Soldiers (or Minions of Splugorth) were attacked and killed by Xiticix Warriors. However, closer inspection shows that the soldiers have been looted of their weapons, valuables and equipment. The Xiticix never take such booty nor weapons other than the occasional hand-held melee weapon like a Vibro-Blade. In fact, looking around, there is clear evidence of energy blasts and conventional combat. This is the handiwork of bandits or raiders rather than the Xiticix. The smell of fiery plasma lingers in the air and energy blast-marks still have light smoke rising from them. The perpetrators can not be far.

Sinker: Our heroes are suddenly face to face with another group of Coalition Soldiers (or a group of hired mercenaries or Headhunters loyal to the CS). Several gasp out loud and one screams, “Oh my god! What have you done?” as he raises his weapon.

You know the drill, these guys instantly assume that the player characters are responsible for killing their teammates. Weapons are about to blaze and heated combat will ensue. Only really good fast talking might prevent a battle or put an end to it. If the player characters try to flee, these CS troopers will follow with murderous vengeance on their minds. If our heroes can somehow get the fighting to stop and convince them of their innocence, the CS agents will let them go. If the player group manages to escape, the Coalition operatives will assume they are in deed the ones responsible and attack them if they ever meet again (perhaps even hunt them down).

Surprise

Hook: Our heroes are away from the action, perhaps even taking a little R&R (rest and relaxation) or pulling easy scouting or reconnaissance duty away from the heaviest fighting. Suddenly,





they are attacked by an angry squad of Xiticix or, in the alternative, bandits or demons attracted by the spoils of war. The player group is easily outnumbered two to one.

Line: After only a few melee rounds, the battle is joined by a group of adventurers who are apparently on the side of our heroes. The assailants flee.

Sinker: The unknown adventurers step from their strategic positions to greet the player characters and laugh about this latest victory. At least half are D-Bees, all wield Coalition weapons, equipment and bits of Dead Boy body armor. If the CS is mentioned, one of them will say something like, "Heck, if you boys wuz Coalition, we woulda saved you from them cutthroats only to kill and loot you ourselves." Further conversation will reveal this ragged looking crew of experienced men at arms (a mage or psychic may be among them) are the ones responsible for the slaughter of the Coalition squad the player group stumbled across during some previous adventure. They hate the CS for crimes and atrocities leveled against their respective races (or occupations or lifestyles) and are taking this opportunity to hunt down and kill Coalition soldiers whenever they can. What loot they can not use themselves, they sell to the Black Market. All have Anarchist or evil alignments and are 5th-8th level. They care little about the Xiticix or the war against them, they care only about revenge (and profit) by bushwhacking Coalition soldiers. (Maybe innocent people as well?) The player group can part ways without incident. If our heroes try to take them in as bandits/looters, or turn them over to the CS (perhaps to clear their own names), they will have a fight on their hands. And these ruthless brigands play for keeps.

No friend of mine

Hook: Our heroes can be on almost any type of hive raiding or assault mission. This job turns out to be a cake walk. Minimum risk or effort.

Line: The group realizes that just down the way is another team locked in heavy combat. They clearly need the player group's help and our heroes will have the element of surprise.

Sinker: Just before the player group actually strikes, they realize the humans in trouble are a squad of 6-12 Coalition Soldiers! It is clear these men and women are dead meat without the player group's help as they are hopelessly outnumbered, worn down and hurt. Do the player characters risk their own lives to help Coalition Soldiers — perhaps a CS team that has harassed, hunted or battled the group in the past? Decision time.

If the player group helps, the CS troops will not do anything to harm them and will (perhaps shamefully and grudgingly) accept their help without any treachery after they escape. Could this give these Coalition soldiers a new perspective on nonhumans and wielders of magic? Do any of them help our heroes in the future? Defect? Become a bit more compassionate and merciful to nonhumans? Or does one or more feel so embarrassed and ashamed that the characters' kindness only serves to make them more despised then ever? Use this as a foil for possible other events, subplots and adventure.

Cornered

Hook: The player characters go to raid a Xiticix tower outpost away from the hive.

Line: The hive seems to be in a state of disarray and the bodies of several Warriors are found scattered throughout this light-

ly manned outpost; no more than 18 fighting class Xiticix, half of which are dead or seriously wounded. The group may encounter and slay one to four seriously injured and easily dispatched Xiticix Warriors as they make their way through the tower. A few others, led by a Hunter, are seen flying away in the direction of the nearest Hive Network.

Sinker: The sounds of battle can be heard in one of the lower chambers. Just as the player characters arrive in the area, they see one dead Xiticix Killer and a second battered (down by half its M.D.C.) and frenzied one. It has just finished killing the Xiticix Super-Warrior that led this outpost. Now the only thing blocking the monster's way out is the player group! Unless they dive out of the way and let it go, they will have a battle to the death on their hands. The Xiticix Killer is in a killing frenzy and feels cornered, so it will attack if it feels the slightest bit threatened.

The Side Show

Hook: For every hero, there are twenty self-serving opportunists, glory hounds, brigands and fools. Humans and D-Bees, warriors, psychics, mages and creatures of magic among them.

Line: These outside forces frequently provoke trouble or cause a problem that exacerbates or creates a bad situation for others and then either flee or teeter on the brink of doom.

Sinker: Unless somebody, like the player group, steps in to save the day, innocent people will suffer, and/or these buffoons, idiots and rash mavericks will die. Unfortunately, most of these cretins and glory hounds do not learn from their mistakes, try to downplay their involvement in any mistake or cause for trouble and misfortune, and ultimately try to take credit for the success and triumph of the real heroes.

Scorched Earth

Hook: The Xiticix are on a rampage. Villages and towns are being burnt to the ground, the population slaughtered to every last man, woman, child, livestock and pet. Nothing is left alive in their wake. It is worse than anything imaginable.

Line: Refugees are fleeing the area in droves.

Sinker: The player characters are frantically trying to save one particular town/village/tribe/caravan of refugees before the Xiticix arrive. Can they do it?

New Beginnings

This is not an HLS, but a plot thread. Even if Lazlo and their allies seem to successfully obliterate the Xiticix from the face of the planet, a few Xiticix are likely to survive. A young (or Elder) Queen may escape the carnage with a few dozen (or several hundred) protectors to start a new hive someplace else. Or was there a tiny, fledgling colony away from the prominent ones that escaped notice and continues to grow? It might be located someplace in Canada or the United States, or perhaps Mexico or Russia. More likely than not, it will be in the backyard of the Coalition States or near Lazlo, Free Quebec or other North American kingdoms. The Queen will choose a quiet parcel of land in some remote wilderness area. A place where they can go unnoticed for 1D4+2 years before their numbers and budding colony becomes too obvious.

Likewise, bands of Xiticix may remain hidden in the vast network of the old colonies, hiding underground, but plotting revenge or rebuilding the colony with a single Queen, egg or

larva and a handful of adult survivors. The threat of the Xiticix is likely to linger for generations, and sprout up when least expected. It's like destroying any insect infestation; the pest may appear



to have been eliminated, but it only takes a handful to survive, breed and begin the process all over again.

The bottom line is that the Xiticix should be hard to completely destroy, and return as recurring villains for years after Lazlo's Great War. A devouring evil that is never completely stomped out and struggles to grow in new, unsuspecting places.



The Legacy of the Xiticix Fighter

“Xiticix Fighter” is a generic term that will quickly come to be associated with everybody who participated in the Xiticix War, and/or spent any serious amount of time fighting the monstrous Xiticix, including CS troops assigned to the Hivelands. It is a *title* of honor that will bring respect, and impress others — “Wow, you were a Xiticix Fighter? Were you part of the Lazlo forces, CS, or freelance? Did you go inside a hive? Battle a Queen? Here, let me buy you a drink (or dinner), and, if it’s not too much of an imposition, tell us about some of the things you’ve seen and done.” The Wars at Tolkeen and Free Quebec will not evoke anywhere near the same level of respect, appreciation, awe, or sense of heroics that the Xiticix War does. Those other confrontations are too political and hurtful, with humans killing humans, as well as D-Bees and monsters.

Ah, but the Xiticix War has the air of grand adventure and heroism. This is due, in large part, to the fact that it is seen as a “noble war” (as noble as any war can be) and is sometimes re-

ferred to as “The Heroes’ War.” A war in which the people of Lazlo, their allies and those who joined the war as independents and freelancers, fought not for reward or glory, but to protect innocent people, destroy an army of monsters and save the world (or at least the North American continent). Heroes all, who risked their own lives to save others. Moreover, the vast majority of combatants will conduct themselves as compassionate, caring, self-sacrificing heroes who put the safety of others before themselves. Thus, even CS soldiers who participated in the “Heroes’ War” are treated with respect and a little bit of awe.

Unfortunately, for years to come, there will be a number of rogues, scoundrels and confidence artists who will falsely claim to be veterans of the Heroes’ War to take advantage of the trust and prestige given to Xiticix Fighters. However, when such frauds are discovered, they are tarred and feathered, or worse.

A Hivelands Adventure

By Bill Coffin

A chance encounter. A risky proposition. A stolen technology. A secret weapon. A chance to destroy the Xiticix once and for all.

Proper Introductions

Our adventure begins with the heroes (Player Characters) finding themselves dangerously close to the Manitoba Hivelands, home of the dreaded Xiticix. Exactly why or how the heroes have found themselves here up to the G.M. Rather than simply “transplant the party here,” this adventure is best left as something to run if and when the heroes ever do enter this region. Certainly, a jaunt to Tolkeen would put them in the vicinity, as would any involvement in ongoing hostilities between that city-state and the Coalition.

One night as they make camp in a thickly wooded area, the heroes sense that they are being watched, or perhaps even followed! Being the seasoned lot that they are, the heroes draw up their weapons and prepare for an ambush, something which is all too common for people traveling in the wild. However, before they completely hunker down, they hear a voice come to them from the surrounding trees:

“Easy, lads. You can lower those gun sights a notch, eh? Let’s not start things off on the wrong foot, or we’ll all be sorry.”

After a pause, another voice comes out: “You sure we can trust these guys, Raskin? Mebbe we should air ‘em out to be sure.”

And with that, a man emerges from the trees and approaches the player group.

“No need to be rude, Summers. I think we can all be friends here.” The man’s hands are empty and held out before him to show that he is unarmed. He appears friendly and earnest, in his mid-thirties, with thinning hair, a full beard and a brilliant white smile. The light body armor he wears has an insignia painted on one of the shoulder pads, a stylized logo of a book, quill pen and lantern all within a circle, the sign of a renegade group of scholars, scientists and other intellectuals who call themselves the **Free Thinkers**. Anybody who has been traveling in or around Tolkeen will know of this group, since they have become local celebrities. These guys have been on the Coalition’s hit list for crimes ranging from information smuggling and pirate broadcasting of seditious material, to unsanctioned genetic experimentation for years. But this is nothing compared to what they have been accused of most recently. Rumor has it that a band of Free Thinkers has infiltrated the Coalition’s vaunted Lone Star Complex, a top-security scientific facility. Exactly why and how the Free Thinkers managed it is a mystery. All anybody knows for sure is that the Coalition has pushed them to their topmost bracket of public enemies, and is sparing no effort to capture them all and try them for crimes against the State. Word has it they stole something of extreme importance, but what that might be is anybody’s guess. After all, nobody really knows what kind

of activities go on at Lone Star, much less what any thieves insane enough to hit the place would consider worth stealing.

As the player characters think this over, it appears plain that Raskin and his party mean the group no harm.

“My name is **Raskin**,” he says and then taps his Free Thinkers logo as he continues. “Yes, as you’ve noticed I am part of that evil and insidious band of human haters, the vile Free Thinkers! Or so the Coalition would have you believe, anyway,” he adds with a grin. “I assure you, we mean you no harm, and wish only to share your campsite and perhaps offer you a tantalizing proposition. If you are interested, then let us sit for a while with you. If not, we shall go our own way and trouble you no more.”

Assuming the heroes welcome Raskin and his party, the gentleman sits down in the camp and continues. “I am one of those Rogue Scientists the Coalition is so very afraid of. They fear men like myself because we like to read, gather knowledge and think for ourselves. And we like to take action when it is needed. And my friends, in this part of the world, action is needed very badly.

“But, where are my manners! I forgot to introduce my teammates. Please forgive my rudeness. This is my wife and fellow researcher, **Illyana**, our resident historian **Cristobal**, and our bodyguards **Summers** and **Copeland**. There were more of us, but sadly, circumstances have whittled our group down to a fraction.”

G.M.’s Note: Full stats for these NPCs can be found at the end of this adventure, but at first glance, it should be fairly simple for the heroes to determine what lines of work these people are in. Judging by their light body armor, lack of heavy weapons, erudite manner of speech, and rucksacks full of portable scientific equipment, it is a no-brainer that Raskin and Illyana are *Rogue Scientists*. Likewise, Cristobal can be easily identified as a *Rogue Scholar* by his sack of books, compact discs, and other stores of ancient knowledge. Summers is a *Headhunter*, as his pitted and scarred body armor and various small arms attest to. Copeland, however, is a little harder to place. Lightly equipped, it would seem his ability to defend himself comes from within, indicating either magic or psionics. The stray flicker of electricity sparking off the man’s fingertips, however, indicates that he is a psionic *Zapper*. All of these characters are of good alignment, as any aura or mind reading abilities will show. Their intentions are honest and open, and they have no plans to bring the party to any harm.

It is assumed that the player characters in this adventure are “heroes” and of good or at least selfish alignment. Getting this adventure to work with evil characters might be a challenge for the G.M., but it should not be impossible. The proposition Raskin is about to spring on the group is one that will play on their sense of nobility and a desire to do the right thing. It will also play on their hatred of the Coalition or the Xiticix (if they have any) as well as mercenary instincts. As with any adventure, the trick to making it all work is finding a way to entice the

characters to involve themselves voluntarily. Nobody enjoys being railroaded into an adventure, so if at first the heroes are uninterested, don't despair. As you read on, you might find additional ways of getting them interested in the unfolding drama.

In Desperate Need

Once all introductions have been made, Raskin's group settles down for a quick meal, as they have been on the move all day, and have not had a chance to eat or rest. Despite the crew's ragged appearance and skimpy rations, they will offer to share their provisions with the player characters. The NPCs will not be offended if the heroes decline the offer, but if they return the favor and offer the NPCs some grub, then both groups will likely get off to a smooth start with each other. After all, there is no better way to strike up a friendship in the badlands of Rifts Earth than to offer a fellow adventurer a free meal.

If asked any questions, Raskin will offer to answer them as completely as he can, but he asks that first he, Illyana and Cristobal be allowed to explain what his band has been up to. That, he insists, should answer most questions.

At that point, the three will give the player group a quick-and-dirty rundown on the Xiticix and the threat they pose to the region and ultimately, to the rest of the planet at large. Raskin, Illyana and Cristobal know all that there is to know about these aliens, and give a brief description of their ecology, how they are spreading, and how the efforts of Lazlo and the Coalition are simply inadequate to handle this menace. (G.M. Note: For simplicity's sake, you could allow your players to review the various sections of this sourcebook that describe the Xiticix in detail. The information presented there is stuff Raskin and company already know, since they are all top authorities on the Xiticix.)

Now that Lazlo has declared war on the Xiticix, Raskin and his teammates explain, the aliens will be pushed into a hyper-aggressive mode and might very well begin to consider *all* humans as potential threats. Given the Xiticix's vast numbers and rapid proliferation, if they all decide to go on the warpath, there might be very little anybody can do to keep them from destroying every human being in North America. Something drastic must be done, and *soon*. That's where the Free Thinkers come in. They have been studying the Xiticix for years, and have long held that these aliens present a grave long-term threat to all creatures. The Free Thinkers have also accurately projected the Xiticix's population growth rate, factoring in things like Psi-Stalker activity, Coalition incursions, the efforts of Lazlo, etc., and they firmly believe that within five years, if the Xiticix are not destroyed or at least severely diminished in number, they will grow to a point where there will be simply too many of them to resist. Five years from now will be the *breaking point!* Or so the Free Thinkers believe. Every year after that will see a geometric *increase* in Xiticix population as well as a geometric *decrease* in non-Xiticix population in and around the ever-expanding Hivelands. At that point, any further resistance is futile. Even a coordinated effort by the Coalition, Lazlo and Tolkeen would probably not be enough to turn back the Xiticix tide. Sure, the Splugorth could probably come in and turn things around, but would anybody really want them to? After all, perhaps the only thing more frightening than a complete Xiticix ex-

pansion would be a triumphant Splugorth poised to inherit what is left of a ravaged North America.

Fearing this future, the Free Thinkers voted on taking action separate from what they considered to be the worthless efforts of the Coalition and Lazlo. So, this league of scientists, scholars and inventors set about to design an ultimate weapon that could very well destroy the *entire* Xiticix presence on Earth in a single blow! For the last few weeks, Raskin and his crew have been journeying northward to the Hivelands so they could "make preparations" for the deployment of their secret weapon.

"Unfortunately," laments Raskin, "the ordeal has taken its toll on us. The wild landscape has proved more difficult than we could have imagined. We have lost all of our vehicles, a good deal of our supplies and weapons, and a number of our fellow Thinkers."

An impatient Illyana breaks into the conversation. "What Raskin is trying to say is that we still have a long way to go, and we could use some help. It will be dangerous, but we can destroy the Xiticix. All of them!"

"Its all true," adds Raskin, saying, "If you could just accompany us the rest of the way to the Hivelands we would be most grateful and while dangerous, you should live to tell the tale, and know that you were part of something great."

"Yes," adds Cristobal. "We could pay you each 1,000 credits in gold now, and another 99,000 credits when we return to our laboratories, pending successful completion of the mission. It would mean you would have to come back with us, but believe me, it would be worth the trip."

"So," asks Illyana, eyebrows raised in anticipation. "Is it a deal?"

Twenty Questions

Most likely, the heroes will have some questions before they give Raskin an answer. Questions such as: What exactly are the "preparations" the Free Thinkers need to make in the Hivelands? What about the rumors that the Free Thinkers have raided Lone Star and are wanted by the Coalition for it? (Which would probably net the heroes a hefty reward, you know ...) And where exactly will the player group have to go after this mission is over to claim their reward? The Free thinkers could be headquartered as far away as Kansas or Iowa — not an easy trek from up north, especially if one's traveling companions are actively pursued by the Coalition!

To each of these questions, Raskin will elaborate, but only if asked. He is fearful that the more these "new friends" learn about the Free Thinkers' position, the less likely they will be willing to help them out. But, Raskin and his crew are all good, noble folks who basically do not have it in them to lie to anybody or cover up the truth, so if pressed, they will spill details aplenty. And, as they talk and share privileged information with people who are essentially strangers, the heroes should quickly realize that these people may be brilliant scientists, but they are naive and desperate adventurers. Without some seasoned pros to accompany them, they will almost certainly perish.

Is it true the Free Thinkers raided Lone Star? And if so, what for? The Free Thinkers decided long ago that one of the most feasible means of destroying the Xiticix was to engineer a bio-weapon that would exclusively target Xiticix DNA. That

way one could spread a tailor-made plague throughout the world, making the entire planet a hostile environment for the alien vermin. At the very least, a Xiticix pandemic with a high mortality rate would drastically reduce their numbers, if not destroy them altogether.

But, even with the high technology of the post-Apocalypse world, simply whipping up a virus that attacks only one kind of genetic architecture is no small task. And while the Free Thinkers are long on brainpower, they are short on resources. Building a combat virus from the ground up would be too costly and would require equipment and expertise the organization simply did not have. The solution, then, was to acquire this technology from somebody who already had it: the Coalition States. Namely, the Genetic Engineering Division (GED) laboratories deep within the Lone Star complex.

After an intense period of intelligence-gathering and training, the Free Thinkers sent a strike team to infiltrate the massive and incredibly well guarded complex. Through a mixture of skill, courage, insanity and pure dumb luck, the group got in, penetrated deep into the complex, accessed top-secret data archives and equipment lockers, raided them, and got out. Three quarters of the team members died escaping, but the rest got away clean and delivered the booty to the Free Thinkers' secret headquarters. From there, the Rogue Scientists worked triple-time to build a viral agent that would specifically attack and destroy the Xiticix genetic pattern but would leave all other alone.

Wait a second! You mean to tell us that a band of Rogue Scientists broke into Lone Star and got away clean? Nobody can do that! If challenged on this point, Raskin will simply shrug and say, "Believe what you wish, but we have indeed built a viral weapon to combat the Xiticix. It wasn't easy. I lost many good friends doing so, and I have sworn to make sure they have not died in vain. That is why I must get to the Hivelands and see this through to the end."

To release the virus? "Indeed." The preparations for stemming the Xiticix expansion was a liberal euphemism for deploying the virus he and his fellow scientists have engineered, and studying how well it works. The virus is an airborne agent designed to replicate and spread *very* quickly. On paper, any Xiticix exposed to the virus has a 99.999% chance of falling ill within 4D6 hours, and dying 1D4+2 days after initial contact. Of course, the virus is entirely untested, and Raskin suspects it is not nearly as effective as purported. That is why he and his team need to stick around and observe the Xiticix after they have been infected.

So... this virus of yours isn't going to kill us too, right? RIGHT? "It really shouldn't," is the unsatisfying answer. The virus is designed to affect only Xiticix genetic patterns, which would render it harmless to all non-Xiticix. Xiticix Killers *might* be susceptible to this agent, but the Free Thinkers aren't worried about them. That said, Raskin can not guarantee that the virus will not mutate at some point and begin affecting non-Xiticix life forms as well. That is the tricky thing about biowarfare — it has a nasty tendency to backfire on you, or to take off in unexpected directions. However, if they weren't confident in the capabilities of the virus they wouldn't unleash it. They are trying to save the world not destroy it.

What happens if the virus doesn't work? If at first you don't succeed, try, try again, eh? Raskin expects the virus to

have at least *some* effect. Optimally, he would like to get tissue samples from stricken Xiticix so he can conduct a necrotic analysis and see exactly how efficient the agent is. With that information, he could return to his secret laboratory, improve the viral formula and conduct another test run into the Hivelands and perform the experiment again. "Naturally, I would need bodyguards and guides for any subsequent trips," the scientist will note. "If this works out, I would be happy to keep you on for future work. At a reasonable price, of course, assuming the cause of stopping the Xiticix is not enough incentive for you."

What about the Coalition? Aren't they after you for the Lone Star thing? "Yes. Yes, they are," Summers the Headhunter will interject grimly. "Offering a cool million for the lot of us. Another million to whoever turns in what we stole from Lone Star."

A million CREDITS?!? Give us one good reason why we shouldn't turn you in and grab the bounty for ourselves! This is a point Raskin will have hoped to avoid, but if it comes up, he will answer it head-on. "I have two reasons. First, the Coalition has no intention of paying off such a bounty. How could they? They have no idea who really belongs to the Free Thinkers, nor do they really know what we stole from Lone Star. So if you were to turn us in, the Coalition would simply take us away and claim that we were not really who you said we were, and thereby default on the reward. It's an old trick, really. One that's saved them a great deal of money over the years. That's why Coalition bounties so rarely go over a few hundred thousand — anything higher and nobody expects the Coalition to pay it, so nobody goes after them. The million-credit purse they've placed on our heads is merely a bit of propaganda to stir up gullible bounty hunters and ruffraff so that we cannot safely approach any cities, towns, or outposts within Coalition aegis.

"Even if the Coalition did intend to pay out such a preposterous reward, you would do well not to think about collecting it. For if we languish in a Coalition prison, there is the very real chance that our viral protocol will never be used and the Xiticix will invade the entire continent. What if we really do have the method of destroying them? All without war and the great loss of life that comes with it. Can you really take that chance?"

Genetic patterns? "When Lone Star scientists secretly created the Xiticix Killer, they pulled together genetic codes from a number of different sources. The Xiticix Killer is not one creature, per se, but an amalgam of many different ones, each contributing a particular bit of their genetic code to the whole. In order for this design to work, Lone Star built a genetic *template* for the Xiticix Killer, a kind of blank molecular helix, if you will, to which they added subsequent genetic code. We always knew such a thing was possible, but nobody outside of the Coalition had the wherewithal to actually *do it*. Once they did, we needed samples of it so we could build our own kind of Xiticix Killer — only not a hulking, monstrous humanoid, but a soldier the size of just a few precious molecules. A soldier against which there is no defense. A soldier that can kill without question or limit."

Ilyana adds, "As far as the Coalition knows, only a Xiticix Killer can be made from the genetic template they have invented. They don't know that the template can be made into a viral weapon or more beneficial forms of biotechnology. If Emperor Prosek and his minions get their hands on our work, they

will probably destroy it, or put it away somewhere under lock and key to gather dust, while we can use it to save lives. Worse, they might study it and unlock its secrets.”



What do you mean? It's just a Xiticix killing virus, right?

Illyana will swallow before answering. “We have created an exceedingly dangerous weapon, not unlike nuclear weaponry. In the wrong hands, it can be misused. The Coalition could make other bioweapons to kill other life forms. It could be the beginning of a kind of genocide the likes of which this planet has never seen.

“You see, one of the reasons why we are so confident that we can improve our Xiticix virus is because it contains a “modular” genetic code with elements easily removed, replaced, moved about, and so on. Any competent geneticist can insert any genetic peculiarity into the viral code, switching this virus from a Xiticix-only weapon to one targeting any other genetic code. Thus, our weapon could be made to target the genetic structure of any specific race or species! Just imagine what kind of damage the Coalition could do with such a thing. No D-Bee would be safe from those human supremacists, who would gladly deploy the weapon indiscriminately in their quest to wipe the planet clean of any creature unlike them.”

“We have no love for many of the monsters roaming our shattered world,” Cristobal the Rogue Scholar says. “But what the Coalition would do with this knowledge is too terrible for us to contemplate. This is another reason why we trust you will not turn us in, reward or no.”

So what stops you from abusing this “weapon,” too? “Because we are dedicated to destroying the Xiticix only,” Raskin

answers. “We have no further agenda. Once we are convinced that the Xiticix are destroyed forever, we are going to destroy all of our data and lab gear used in the construction of this biological agent. We also have psychics on call who will blank our memories so we will never be able to retrace our creative process.

“Besides,” Raskin says almost ominously, “If we were so inclined, wouldn't we have abused this weapon already?”

Speaking of weapons, where exactly is this virus you keep talking about? To this, Raskin will produce a small black box from his rucksack. Touching a stud on the side of the box causes the box top to flip up, revealing a small video screen and a touch pad — the device's controls. “Inside this housing is one liter of viral agent loaded into a hyper-aeration device. Upon activation, spray nozzles will mist the agent over a period of one hour. From there, the virus will spread on its hosts, and through the air. (G.M. Note: The *virus box* is made of flimsy Mega-Damage material and can take only 4 M.D.C. before its destruction.)

So why not detonate the device now? A Xiticix patrol is bound to come by at some point. It would get infected and carry the virus back to its Hive, right? “Maybe, maybe not.” Any patrolling Xiticix might die before it gets home, rendering the virus inert. Besides, the chances of hitting a Xiticix patrol by chance are too small to waste this, the *only working sample* of the Xiticix virus the Free Thinkers have been able to create so far. To be effective, they must detonate it in a place where hundreds, perhaps thousands of Xiticix will be infected and where the results can be observed firsthand. That is why the Free Thinkers are on their way to one of the six major hives to conduct this deadly experiment (If there is no preference, the G.M. may roll 1D6 to randomly determine which one). That is also why the trigger mechanism has been calibrated to go off at 200 feet (61 m) below ground or lower. At any altitude higher than that, the device simply will not deploy.

Two hundred feet underground? But why? This point will make Raskin answer a bit sheepishly. “Because no Queen's chamber is above that point. If we infect that deeply within the hive, infecting the entire population is almost certain. If we do not, there is a chance the infection will not reach the Queen, which renders the entire exercise moot. If the Queen survives, so does the entire race, and we will have to return and try again. Besides, the virus will spread more rapidly in a contained environment.”

This is insane! How can you expect us to penetrate a Xiticix hive? “It's not so difficult, really,” answers Copeland the Zapper, who until this point has remained silent. “We have enough Xiticix scent glands to get us in undetected. The hard part will be getting down deep enough just because nobody we know has ever successfully navigated a Xiticix hive inside-out. The trick will be getting out once we get in. There's no telling how the buggies are gonna react when the box starts a-spewin'.”

“Besides,” adds Summers the Headhunter, “we already got in and out of Lone Star. This should be a cake walk.”

Isn't there anybody else out here besides us who can help you guys? “Not really. This is a relatively desolate part of North America, and roving bands of adventurers are in short supply. Besides, who can we trust? We took a big chance on you — but we just have a good feeling about your group. We are in dire straits. The world doesn't know it yet, but so is everybody. Please help us. It's the right thing to do.”

If the player group really wanted to recruit additional folks to their new cause, or if they simply want to find another group of adventurers to unload the Free Thinkers on, they can. There should be other freebooters and Psi-Stalkers in the vicinity, although finding them might prove difficult. In the interim, the player characters may come to like them and/or feel obligated or want to help.

Well, good luck doing it without us, because there is no way a measly 100,000 credits even begins to cover the risk this entails. Any other reasons why we should join this fool's crusade? Actually, there are several. The first and foremost is because the Free Thinkers *might* actually be on to something. Their Xiticix virus *will* work to some degree, only nobody knows how well. It might wipe out the aliens entirely, or it might only weaken them, but either way it will help the Xiticix Fighters gathering outside the border of the Hivelands. Regardless of one's profit motive or sense of selfishness, there should be something chilling about the prospect of the Xiticix overrunning all of North America. Sure, lots of people don't believe the situation is as bad as the Coalition or Lazlo says it is, but the monsters are serious trouble, and one or more characters in the player group may have lost somebody to or battled the Xiticix themselves. Heck, they might be here to fight Xiticix to begin with. Under such circumstances, nobody short of a true Diabolic or Miscreant alignment should be willing to walk away from this situation, and glory-hounds will love this opportunity to "save the world" (although nobody will probably believe them).

Forcing Their Hand

Either to punctuate the situation or to further "motivate" a reluctant group to help, there is another, more compelling reason. Soon after Raskin and company begin to address this last question a volley of laser fire cuts through the night and peppers the camp! The exchange will be brief, since the group is under fire by a four-man squad of Coalition Commandos on a scouting mission. (For stats on these troopers, please refer to the *Dramatis Personae* section of this adventure.) After a single fusillade, they will beat a hasty retreat into the darkness. Unless the G.M. wishes to rule otherwise, the Coalition troopers should have an easy time escaping.

Once the smoke clears, the characters scramble for cover and prepare to defend themselves, but they are bound to ask...

Where the hell did these Coalition troops come from?! "They've been dogging us since we fled Lone Star. Thought we lost them in Nebraska. I guess not. Another reason we need your help. Our group didn't start off this small, you know. But after a running gunfight with the Dead Boys, there's not much left of us. To tell you the truth, we're not as worried about the Xiticix as we are about the Coalition. Once in the Hivelands, if we keep our heads down and use our scent glands properly, we shouldn't have too bad a time getting to the Hive Network and inside. But those Coalition jerks have us on the run, way outnumbered and outgunned. There's no way we can keep clear of them until we get into Xiticix territory. And you know what's funny about that, they probably won't follow us into the Hivelands. The trick is getting there."

Why didn't you tell us this before? "Didn't have the chance, now did we?" says the laconic Copeland. "You know, chances are, one of those Dead Boys marked you and caught a

video grab of your faces. If you still don't want to come with us, fine. But every trooper in the area is likely to have you pegged for a criminal helping the notorious Free Thinkers. I'd recommend leaving the area, with or without us."

Great! Just great! "You can still help us," offers Raskin. "We're still willing to pay and have Cyber-Docs and other medical experts back home who can alter your appearance. We also have a few datahackers who might be able to tamper with Coalition records and remove you from their Wanted List. You're in this now. Might as well make the best of it."

And you call this a deal? "No," says Cristobal, "but it's all we have to offer. Whether you take it or leave it is up to you."

Things to Consider

At this point, the player characters' destiny is in their hands. They can either go with the Free Thinkers and attempt their bold mission, or they can part ways. Either way promises to bring the characters some noteworthy adventuring.

If the characters leave the Free Thinkers and forego the Hive run, they may head out to wherever they like. However, **Strike Force Durango**, the Coalition team sent to retrieve the stolen Lone Star information, will decide to come after the characters as accomplices, spies or bandits in league with the Free Thinkers. Regardless of their misconceptions and motivation, Strike Force Durango will now dog the player group until they either reach a safe haven where the Coalition dares not tread, or until they destroy the Strike Force. Neither are tantalizing options. Way up near the Hivelands, there are no nearby safe zones to travel to, and along the way, the Coalition Strike Force is certain to make at least one or two attacks upon them.

Given the amount of armor the force has, surviving such an onslaught unscathed will be difficult but not impossible. (Hey, these are *heroes* we're talking about. They always seem to have ways of triumphing over ridiculous odds, right?) If the heroes do manage to destroy the entire Strike Force, they should have some nice weapons and items to salvage and use on their continuing trek. Any CS items will fetch a good price on the Black Market, although they may be exceedingly difficult to move without gaining undue notice from Coalition spies and informers.

If the heroes decide to accompany the Free Thinkers to the nearest Xiticix hive, then they have a great deal of peril in store. Regardless of which hive the group decides to head to, the journey will take at least several days, during which time, they can expect nonstop harassment from:

- Strike Force Durango, who will not give up their pursuit until they feel that their quarry is too far within Xiticix territory to pursue safely.
- Other CS patrols, operatives and/or bounty hunters operating in the area.
- Xiticix patrols, which will become increasingly frequent the closer the group gets to the Hive. Better make sure these sentries aren't put on red alert, or it might take weeks to get another shot at a Hive entrance.
- Run-ins with monsters in the wild; what few are left up here. Between Coalition patrols, Psi-Stalker activity and Xiticix expansion, many of the region's D-Bees, monsters and other exotic wildlife have been destroyed or forced out. Those that

remain are likely to be tougher than the average denizen of the Northern Plains. A Dragon hatchling or major demon would be good examples. Who knows? Perhaps resourceful characters might manage to convince forces such as these to accompany them on their Hive run!

- Run-ins with a tribe of Xiticix Killers who can sense the viral compound the Free Thinkers have created, and conclude that it might hurt *them*, too. Or more likely, tricked by the Xiticix scent they carry. A gang of angry, determined Xiticix Killers are just the thing to make a bad trip even worse.
- A wild Psi-Stalker clan who does not appreciate trespassers. Some kind of game or challenge might be required for the player group to pass unmolested. Given the Psi-Stalkers' hatred of the Xiticix and the nature of the heroes' quest, it should not be difficult to get some kind of help from them, no matter what strange kind of culture they follow. Of course, if they learn that the heroes might very well exterminate *all* of the Xiticix in one blow, they might not be too happy about it. After all, where the challenge in that?

Run Silent, Run Deep

Once the heroes make it to the Hive, they will find that the hard part is just beginning. Since the group already has a few Xiticix scent glands prepared, they should be able to enter the Hive unopposed, provided they don't pick a fight or stop to smell the roses. The problem once they are inside the Hive, of course, is that they could get very lost or disoriented in the Hive's 3D architecture. The maze-like Hive could very well

keep the heroes going in circles for a long time, so that by the time they reach the Queen's Chamber (or even just get to the second or third level), the chemicals from their scent glands may have worn off! This would be a good time to have brought replacements; otherwise the heroes will suddenly find themselves revealed deep within the Hive, faced by rapidly closing Xiticix. If the heroes have some means of teleportation, intangibility, or other means of rapid escape, then perhaps they can avoid a gruesome death (as well as never knowing if their viral device ever deployed, let alone worked). If not, they might have a very, very interesting trip back to the surface. In the alternative, the group may be *captured* and hauled away to be turned into "Sludge." They will have roughly 36+1D6 hours to make good their escape or be eaten alive!

In general, fighting at all in the Hive is a bad idea, since there will be Xiticix everywhere and the moment one is in distress it will emit distress pheromones that will alert the entire Hive. And as anybody who has tangled with Xiticix before knows, you never face just one. They *always* seem to have an army of friends lurking nearby, all of whom are only too willing to carve you up into little pieces. **Note:** A fun twist might be to have the placement of the virus go off surprisingly smooth and the group about to begin its way up and out when the hive falls under attack from the CS or Lazlo forces! The hive is in a panic and our heroes could be caught in the cross-fire (or finally recognized as invaders now that Hunters, Super-Warriors and young Queens may be involved).

For details on Hive architecture as well as ideas for what kinds of tactical challenges await the heroes during this part of



the adventure, please refer to the Hive section of this world book, where you will find excellent details on Hive layout, security, design, and entry possibilities. **Author's Note:** Entering a Xiticix Hive is probably one of the few chances the characters will get to undergo a good old-fashioned "dungeon crawl" adventure, since such exploits are largely a thing of the past. But for those of you with a nostalgic bone in your body, or for those looking forward to an episode of purely tactical gaming or frenzied combat, this part of the exploit will be right up your alley.

The Results

Assuming the heroes get in, deploy the device and get out again, now they can begin the fun part — setting it all off and seeing what happens. As mentioned before, the precise efficacy of the virus is best left to the G.M., but the campaign's dramatic purposes would probably best be served if the viral agent was not particularly effective, if at all. For example, the virus could only give the Xiticix the sniffles for 1D4 days with minimal effect or penalties, say, -1 on all combat bonuses. And nobody dies. Or has a minor effect with 2D4% of the population dying over the next 1D4 weeks and 5D6x10% of the population getting sick; reduce all combat bonuses of the ill by half and flying and running speed by 30%. Hardly the devastating effects anticipated and a huge disappointment. This is due in large part to the Xiticix's high Physical Endurance, limited regenerative abilities and high resistance to disease and poison. Furthermore, the insect aliens will quickly develop an immunity, so if there is a next time, the even more powerful strain will be half as effective!

Design Note: Hey, what did you expect? If the heroes wipe out the entire Xiticix population in one adventure, it would certainly be anti-climactic and make this world book pretty worthless. Biological warfare is just not a viable option against the Xiticix. The Free Thinkers gave it a good try, but they were destined to fail. The important point is that the player characters took the risk, tried to help, and earned some experience points. Not only that, but they are now among the elite few to have ever gone inside a Xiticix Hive and come out alive. That information may serve them well in the future.

Aftermath

After the disappointing results of the experiment, the player characters may find themselves with a few interesting options ahead of them. They might wish to return to the Free Thinkers' secret compound and stay there a while, at least to give themselves a break from all the Xiticix activity and get some money. (**G.M.'s Note:** The precise location of the Free Thinkers' compound was left out of this adventure so you can place it where it would best suit your campaign. Most likely, it would be somewhere in the central U.S., such as Iowa, Nebraska, or northern Kansas — just far enough from major Coalition activity and the Xiticix, but not *too* far.) Assuming any of the original Free Thinkers are still alive, the heroes will have cultivated some lifelong friends, which is always a good thing. You never can tell when you might need an extra Headhunter or Rogue Scientist to pitch in on a vexing problem. Getting to the secret labs should be an adventure or series of them in and of itself. With trouble from the Coalition States, possible involvement with Tolkeen (friends and allies of the Free Thinkers) and any number of other things.

If the group was discovered in or around the Hive Network, the Xiticix are likely to remember them, and will know them by smell forever more. This means they will seek revenge if they ever meet again. The Xiticix may not articulate it to those outside of their species, but they have excellent memories, and do not forget those who have wronged them.

After this escapade, it might be a good, long while before the heroes even think about returning to the Hivelands. On the other hand, they may be more determined to destroy these monsters than ever, and join the Lazlo Xiticix Fighters.

Don't forget the CS still wants to apprehend the Free Thinkers and the scum who helped them (um, that's the player characters).

And finally, there is an excellent chance that if the heroes were not already on poor terms with the Coalition, they will be by the end of this adventure. Congratulations! You are now proud members of a vast legion of adventurers who have crossed swords and traded bullets with one of the most powerful organizations on the planet. Not only that, but you're wanted "Enemies of the State" and probably considered members of the Free Thinkers. Hey, cheer up — there is nothing cooler than seeing your mug on a wanted poster, especially when it has a huge number in the reward caption. Just don't forget to look over your shoulder every now and again, because somebody is taking an interest in you and waving over some Dead Boys, Bounty Hunters, mercenaries or ... well, you get the idea.

Hivelands Dramatis Personae

Raskin, Free Thinker

Race: Human

Alignment: Scrupulous good.

Attributes: I.Q.: 24, M.E.: 19, M.A.: 17, P.S.: 11, P.P.: 12, P.E.: 11, P.B.: 12, Spd: 11

Hit Points: 59, **S.D.C.:** 30.

Weight: 180 lbs (81.7 kg); **Height:** 6 feet, 2 inches (1.88 m)

Age: 41

Disposition: Raskin is the true deep-sky thinker and dreamer, always with his head in the clouds pursuing some far-away concept or scientific premise. Without his more sensible wife Illyana to keep him grounded, he probably would not get very much done at all.

Experience Level: 12th level Rogue Scientist.

Skills of Note: Computer Operation (+30%), Land Navigation (+14%), Literacy (+10%), Advanced Mathematics (+30%), Radio: Basic (+20%), Read Sensory Equipment (+20%), Basic Electronics (+20%), Pilot Automobile (+10%), Wilderness Survival (+15%), Criminal Science & Forensics (+15%), First Aid (+15%), Paramedic (+15%), Medical Doctor (+15%), M.D. in Cybernetics (+15%), Pathology (+15%), Pilot Airplane (+20%), Pilot Helicopter (+20%), Pilot Motorcycle (+20%), Pilot Truck (+20%), Navigation (+20%), Computer Hacking (+10%), Anthropology (+30%), Archaeology (+30%), Astronomy (+30%), Biology (+30%), Botany (+30%), Chemistry (+30%), Chemistry: Analytical (+30%), Computer Programming, (+10%), Writing (+10%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks Per Melee: Six

Combat Bonuses: +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +2 to strike, +2 to damage.

Other Combat Info: Kick: 1D6. Critical Strike: Natural 19-20. Body Throw/Flip: 1D6 plus victim loses one attack and initiative.

Money: Raskin has *millions* stashed away for funding his various scientific research projects for the good of others. Much of this money has been stolen from the Coalition somehow, only furthering his criminal record with them.

Weapons: C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip. Extra Ammo: 6 long E-clips, 3 standard E-clips.

Body Armor: Battered Urban Warrior armor with only 39 M.D.C. left.

Other Equipment: Standard starting equipment, along with a *NGS2 Basic Survival Pack*.

Illyana

Race: Human

Alignment: Principled good.

Attributes: I.Q.: 24, M.E.: 20, M.A.: 10, P.S.: 10, P.P.: 10, P.E.: 10, P.B.: 15, Spd: 16

Hit Points: 57, **S.D.C.:** 20

Weight: 150 lbs (68.1 kg); **Height:** 5 feet, 8 inches (1.73 m)

Age: 40

Disposition: Calm and level-headed. She reserves her judgment and her tongue until Raskin has said his peace, since she usually has to do some spin control on what her sometimes less-than-detail-oriented spouse shoots off. Overall, a friendly and warm woman who is just as deeply devoted to battling the Xiticix as her husband is. Really, she has no other cause in life. She has dedicated herself wholly to it.

Experience Level: 12th level Rogue Scientist.

Skills of Note: Computer Operation (+30%), Land Navigation (+14%), Literacy (+10%), Advanced Mathematics (+30%), Radio: Basic (+20%), Read Sensory Equipment (+20%), Basic Electronics (+20%), Pilot Automobile (+10%), Wilderness Survival (+15%), Criminal Science & Forensics (+15%), First Aid (+15%), Paramedic (+15%), Medical Doctor (+15%), M.D. in Cybernetics (+15%), Pathology (+15%), Aircraft Mechanics (+20%), Automotive Mechanics (+20%), Locksmith (+20%), Mechanical Engineer (+20%), Robot Mechanics (+20%), Weapons Engineer (+20%), Anthropology (+30%), Archaeology (+30%), Astronomy (+30%), Biology (+30%), Botany (+30%), Chemistry (+30%), Chemistry: Analytical (+30%), Computer Programming (+10%), Writing (+10%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks Per Melee: Six

Combat Bonuses: +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +2 to strike, +2 to damage.

Other Combat Info: Kick: 1D6. Critical Strike: Natural 19-20. Body Throw/Flip: 1D6 plus victim loses one attack and initiative.

Money: Same as Raskin. His money is her money, since she is the one who actually keeps track of it.

Weapons: C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip. Extra Ammo: 4 long E-clips, 12 standard E-clips, 3 micro-fusion grenades.

Body Armor: The Plastic-Man with 31 M.D.C. left.

Other Equipment: Standard starting equipment, along with a *NGS2 Basic Survival Pack*.

Cristobal

Race: Human

Alignment: Principled good.

Attributes: I.Q.: 24, M.E.: 21, M.A.: 18, P.S.: 11, P.P.: 11, P.E.: 11, P.B.: 11, Spd: 11

Hit Points.: 59, **S.D.C.:** 20

Weight: 150 lbs (68.1 kg); **Height:** 5 feet, 9 inches (1.75 m)

Age: 37

Disposition: A gentle soul who loves to learn new things, especially bits of lost knowledge from before the Great Cataclysm. A dedicated bibliophile, he has a personal library of some 250 pre-Rifts books hidden away back at the Free Thinkers' compound. The titles range from ancient classics to pre-Rifts technical manuals to an obscure space opera novel called *Overmind*. In general, Cristobal deplors violence, but will fight when necessary to promote the causes he believes in, which chiefly consist of destroying (or at least containing) the Xiticix, getting the Coalition to relax its ban on most pre-Rifts books, and furthering the rediscovery of pre-Rifts knowledge of all kinds.

Experience Level: 10th level Rogue Scholar.

Skills of Note: Literacy (+60%), Basic Math (+40%), Computer Operations (+30%), Pilot Automobile (+10%), Art (+10%), Computer Programming (+10%), Lore: Demons & Monsters (+10%), Writing (+10%), Photography (+10%), Anthropology (+10%), Archaeology (+10%), Astronomy (+10%), Pilot Airplane (+10%), Streetwise (+10%), Computer Hacking (+10%), Cryptography (+10%), Optic Systems (+10%), Radio: Scramblers (+10%), Radio: Basic (+10%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks Per Melee: Six

Combat Bonuses: +4 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge, +1 to strike, +2 to damage.

Other Combat Info: Kick: 1D6. Critical Strike on a Natural 19-20, Body Throw/Flip: 1D6 plus victim loses one attack and initiative

Money: Cristobal has a few thousand credits saved up here and there, but he is largely not interested in money. He prefers to barter for goods and services.

Weapons: NG-57 Northern Gun Heavy-Duty Ion Blaster (2): Mega-Damage: 2D4 or 3D6. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of attacks per melee round. Range: 500 feet (152 m). Payload: 10 shots per standard E-clip. Extra Ammo: 10 extra standard E-Clips. Cristobal typically fires until his first pistol runs out of energy, then he will go to the next one before reloading either. He is not a two-gun shooter, even though he is a big fan of what the ancients called "Hong Kong Action Cinema."

Body Armor: The Plastic-Man with 35 M.D.C.

Other Equipment: A pre-Rifts digital camera, which can store up to 10 hours of footage on its internal hard disk. The camera is solar powered. And finally, a digital book, also a gem of pre-Rifts technology, that consists of a simple screen and an internal hard disk on which thousands and thousands of pre-Rifts books are saved. This item is priceless to Cristobal, for it lends him an extra +10% to any Technical skill roll, because of the wealth of information it offers him (or anybody else who can use it. The book requires a successful Computer Operation roll to use properly).

Summers

Race: Human

Alignment: Unprincipled good.

Attributes: I.Q.: 11, M.E.: 12, M.A.: 7, P.S.: 25, P.P.: 20, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 11, Spd: 32

Hit Points: 58, **S.D.C.:** 42; also see body armor.

Weight: 200 lbs (90.8 kg); **Height:** 6 feet, 4 inches (1.9 m).

Age: 36

Disposition: Although gruff, sarcastic and not particularly likeable, this rough and tumble character from the northern badlands has been a close personal friend of Raskin and Illyana for years. He was there when the Free Thinkers first began, and he will never abandon their cause. He is particularly driven to destroy the Xiticix, having lost his family to an alien attack some years ago. While he does not trust newcomers easily (and will gladly take advantage of them), once he does, he will never turn his back on them, regardless of the circumstances.

Experience Level: 7th level Headhunter.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (+15%), Radio: Scramblers (+10%), Detect Ambush (+10%), Detect Concealment (+15%), Tracking (+10%), Land Navigation (+10%), Weapon Systems (+10%), Read Sensory Equipment (+10%), Pilot Jet Pack (+12%), Pilot Tanks and APCs (+10%), Pilot Motorcycle (+5%), Pilot Hovercraft (+5%), Lore: Demon (+10%), Boxing, Wrestling, Climbing, Swimming, Wilderness Survival, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Heavy, W.P. Sword (+3 to strike and parry)

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: Six

Combat Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +3 to pull punch, +5 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +8 to parry, +8 to dodge, +5 to strike, +9 to damage, +3 to save vs poison & magic, +10% to save vs coma/death.

Other Combat Info: Kick: 2D4+9, Jump Kick, Entangle, Critical Strike: Natural 18-20, Paired Weapons, Knockout/Stun: Natural 20.

Money: No, thanks. Raskin supplies him with what he needs. he pretty much scavenges or steals whatever else he requires. ("Hey ... you want that extra E-clip? Cuz if not, I'm taking it.")

Weapons:

C-27 "Light" Plasma Cannon: Mega-Damage: 6D6 per blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of attacks per melee round. Range: 1,600 feet (488 km). Payload: 10 shots per energy canister. Bonuses: +1 to strike.

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Extra Ammo: 4 C-27 energy canisters, 8 long E-clips, 4 standard E-clips, 30 micro-fusion grenades in a satchel.

Body Armor:

CA-7 Heavy "Dead Boy" Armor: Mega-Damage: Head/Helmet — 75, arms — 60 each, Legs — 80 each, Main Body — 100. Note: Summers "liberated" this from an unfortunate Coalition ground-pounder just a week ago. Except for a hole in the neck area (a lucky shot, that), the suit is in perfect condition. When Summers gets back to the Free Thinkers' compound, he intends on removing some of the Coalition stylization and replacing it with his own so he doesn't look like what he calls a "C-Man."

Other Equipment: Camouflage clothing, gas mask & filter, tinted goggles, hatchet, 4 knives (1D6 S.D.C. each), robot medical kit, IRMSS, tent, knapsack, backpack, saddlebags, two canteens, and freeze-dried rations for six weeks.

Copeland

Race: Human

Alignment: Principled good.

Attributes: I.Q.: 15, M.E.: 20, M.A.: 10, P.S.: 15, P.P.: 15, P.E.: 15, P.B.: 12, Spd: 20

Hit Points: 45, **S.D.C.:** 36.

Weight: 170 lbs (77.2 kg); **Height:** 5 feet, 11 inches (1.8 m).

Age: 28

I.S.P.: 180

Disposition: Quiet and withdrawn, this guy never makes a statement or takes an action unless he is absolutely sure it is the right thing to do. While this hesitation sometimes gets him into trouble (he usually suffers from a -3 penalty to initiative), it has also kept him from rushing into situations he can not handle, as he was won't to do as a brash youth who had not yet learned to master his incredible electrokinetic powers.

Experience Level: 6th level Zapper.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (+10%), Pilot: Jet Packs (+10%), Read Sensory Equipment (+10%), Basic Electronics (+25%), Body Building, Climbing (+5%), Running, Boxing, Wrestling, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Blunt (+2 to strike and parry)

Special Zapper R.C.C. Abilities: Impervious to Electricity, Sense Electricity, Electrical Aura & Radiate Electricity, Electricity Absorption.

Psionics: Electrokinesis, Telekinesis (Super), Telekinetic Force Field, Telekinetic Acceleration Attack, Telekinetic Punch, Brain Scan, Neuro-Touch, Neuro-Strike, Telekinetic Leap, Summon Inner Strength, Alter Aura.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks Per Melee: Six

Combat Bonuses: +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +2 to strike.

Other Combat Info: Kick attack: 1D6, Critical Strike: Natural 18-20.

Money: 10,000 credits saved up and stashed back at the Free Thinkers' secret headquarters.

Weapons:

NG-P7 Northern Gun Particle Beam Rifle: Mega-Damage: 1D4X10. Rate of Fire: Standard. Range: 1,200 feet /365 m. Payload: 8 shots per E-Clip.

NG-33 Northern Gun Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 1D6. Rate of Fire: Standard. Range: 800 feet /244 m. Payload: 20 shots per E-Clip

Extra Ammo: 9 standard E-clips.

Body Armor:

The Plastic-Man: M.D.C.: 35

Other Equipment: Traveling clothes & boots, flashlight, air filter & gas mask, language translator, binoculars, laser distancer, tinted goggles, utility belt, backpack, 2 medium-sized sacks, silver holy symbol, walkie-talkie and canteen.

CS Strike Force Durango

G.M. Note: The exact number of these misanthropes is left to the discretion of the Game Master, but there should be one Coalition Soldier of one kind or another for each player character, plus the CS Squad leader, Lt. Thomas Kent. If the player group is especially powerful, it may be wise to increase the number of CS troops by 30% or 50%, maybe even double. Don't forget that *reinforcements* are available. Team Durango originates from Lone Star but can get support and resupply at any CS base, including Forts Barron and Perrion. As always, the G.M. should modify the antagonists to fit his or her individual tastes, game setting and player characters.

Bill recommends two Glitter Boy Killers, two Striker SAMAS, one or two Spider-Skull Walkers, and one Scorpion-Skull Walker along with 6-10 Commandos. But then Bill is evil. See *Rifts® World Book 11: Coalition War Campaign™* for more information about these Military O.C.C.s and additional equipment, robots, power armor and vehicles.

Lieutenant Thomas Kent

Leader of Strike Force Durango

Race: Human

Alignment: Aberrant

Attributes: I.Q.: 15, M.E.: 15, M.A.: 15, P.S.: 21 (29 in armor), P.P.: 15, P.E.: 16, P.B.: 10, Spd: 30 (44 in armor).

Hit Points: 60, S.D.C.: 85

Weight: 180 lbs (81.7 kg); **Height:** 6 feet (1.83 m).

Age: 30

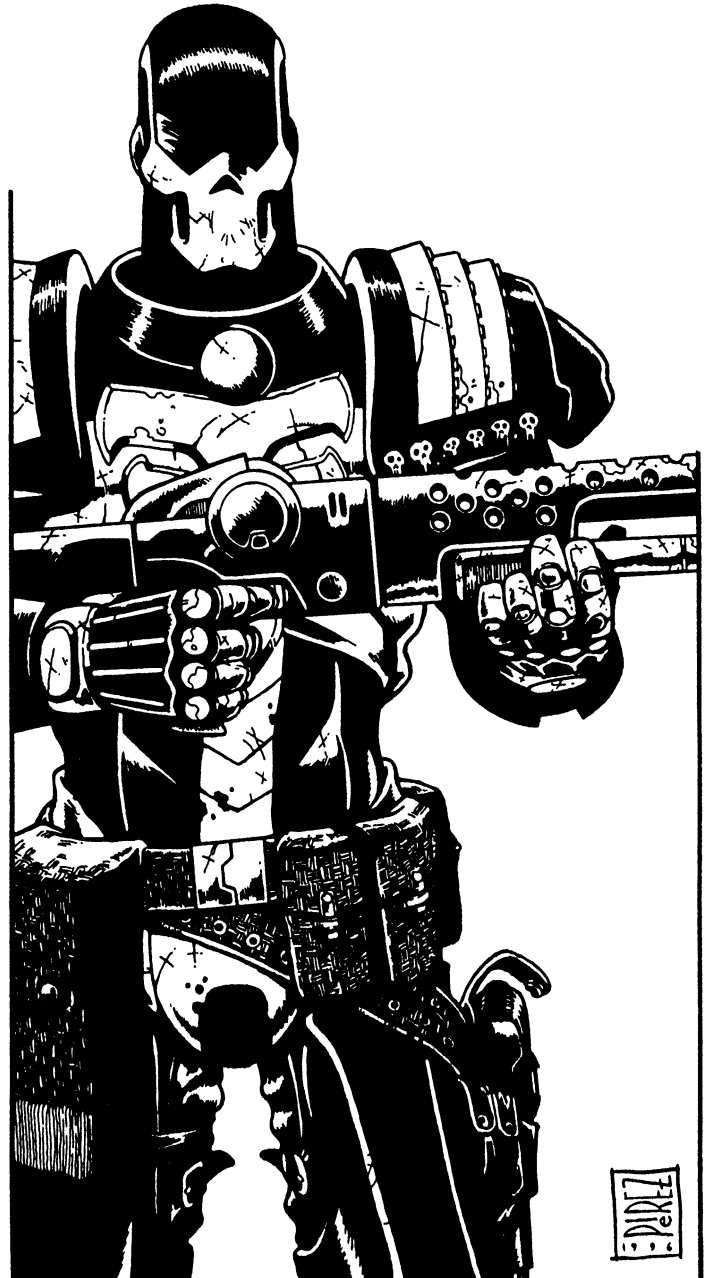
Disposition: A cold and grim individual totally dedicated to finishing his mission at all costs. An unflinching patriot and loyalist to the Coalition's ethos of human supremacy, Kent will gladly sacrifice his own men and resources if he thinks it will increase his chances of destroying the Free Thinkers (D-Bee loving scum that they are!) and retrieving the stolen Lone Star information. It scarcely occurs to him that he does not actually know what it is they took, but he's confident he can make them talk. **Experience Level:** 9th level CS Commando.

Skills of Note: Math: Basic (+20%), Radio: Basic (+20%), Radio: Scramblers, Land Navigation (+10%), Intelligence (+10%), Parachuting (+20%), Pilot: Jet Packs (+10%), Pilot: Robots & Power Armor (+10%), Recognize Weapon Quality (+12%), Wilderness Survival (+15%), Climbing (+10%), Running, Detect Ambush (+10%), Detect Concealment (+10%), Escape Artist (+10%), Tracking (+10%), Body Building & Weight Lifting, Boxing, Wrestling, Climbing, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Sword (+4 to strike and parry), W.P. Paired Weapons.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Commando.

Attacks Per Melee: Seven

Combat Bonuses: +3 to initiative, +3 to strike, +5 to parry, +5 to dodge, +6 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +5 to pull punch, +7 to damage (+15 in armor) and +3 to save vs Horror Factor.



Other Combat Info: Body Flip/Throw: +3, Body Block/Tackle, Backward Sweep, Disarm: +1, Kick Attack: 2D6, Automatic Dodge: +1, Critical Body Flip/Throw, Jump Kick, Death Blow: Natural 18-20, Knockout/Stun: Natural 20, Pin/Incapacitate: 18-20, Crush/Squeeze: 1D4+7.

Weapons:

CP-50 Dragonfire: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple-blast burst. Micro-fusion grenades, fired from the underbarrel grenade launcher, do 6D6 M.D. to a 12 foot /3.6 m diameter blast area. Rate of Fire: Laser fires single shots or triple bursts equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Grenade launcher fires single shot or burst of four. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m) for laser, 1,200 feet (365 m) for grenade launcher. Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip and 12 grenades in grenade launcher.

CP-30 Laser Pulse Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D4 per single blast or 4D6 per triple-blast burst. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 600 feet (183 m). Payload: 30 laser shots per long E-Clip.

Vibro-Sword: Mega-Damage: 2D6.

Extra Ammo: 16 long E-Clips, 24 micro-fusion grenades in a crossover bandoleer.

Body Armor: CA-6EX Heavy “Dead Boy” Armor: Head/Helmet — 100 M.D.C., Arms — 100 M.D.C. each, Legs — 120 M.D.C. each, Main Body — 200 M.D.C. Bonuses: +8 P.S., +14 Spd, +10 feet (3 m) to length of leaps, reduces rate of fatigue by 50%.

Other Equipment: Two flares, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, walkie-talkie, canteen and food rations.

Typical Dead Boy Commandos

Race: Human

Alignment: Mostly Anarchist and Unprincipled, but with a strong sense of discipline; *always* follow their commander’s orders.

Typical Attributes: I.Q.: 13, M.E.: 13, M.A.: 13, P.S.: 19 (27 in armor), P.P.: 15, P.E.: 15, P.B.: 10, Spd: 30 (44 in armor).

Average Hit Points: 45; **S.D.C.:** 45.

Average Approximate Height: 6 feet (1.83 m); **Weight:** 180-200 lbs (81.7 to 90 kg).

Average Age: 21-27

General Disposition: Like their commander, these guys are tough and rock-steady killers ready to pull the trigger at the drop of a hat. However, they really are not “loose cannons” or thrill-killers. Rather, they are finely honed killing-machines who can be ordered into swift action at a moment’s notice. Quick, methodical and deadly. The pride of Coalition Special Forces.

Average Experience Level: 3rd to 5th level CS Commando.

Skills of Note: Math: Basic (+20%), Radio: Basic (+20%), Radio: Scramblers, Land Navigation (+10%), Intelligence (+10%), Parachuting (+20%), Pilot: Jet Packs (+10%), Pilot: Robots & Power Armor (+10%), Recognize Weapon Quality (+12%), Wilderness Survival (+15%), Climbing (+10%), Running, Detect Ambush (+10%), Detect Concealment (+10%), Escape Artist (+10%), Tracking (+10%), Body

Building & Weight Lifting, Boxing, Wrestling, Climbing, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Sword (+4 to strike and parry), W.P. Paired Weapons.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Commando.

Attacks Per Melee: Four or Five.

Combat Bonuses: +1 to initiative, +1 to strike, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +5 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +3 to pull punch, +3 to damage (+15 in armor) and +2 to save vs Horror Factor.

Other Combat Info: Body Flip/Throw: +1, Body Block/Tackle, Backward Sweep, Disarm, Kick Attack: 2D6, Knockout/Stun: Natural 20, Pin/Incapacitate: 18-20, Crush/Squeeze: 1D4+7.

Typical Weapons:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Vibro-Saber: 2D4 M.D.

Extra Ammo: 16 long E-Clips.

Body Armor:

CA-6EX Heavy “Dead Boy” Armor: Armor: Head/Helmet — 100 M.D.C., Arms — 100 M.D.C. each, Legs — 120 M.D.C. each, Main Body — 200 M.D.C. Bonuses: +8 P.S., +14 Spd, +10 ft./3 m to length of leaps, reduces rate of fatigue by 50%.

Other Equipment: Two flares, two fragmentation grenades, binoculars, robot medical kit, pocket computer, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, walkie-talkie, canteen and food rations.

Typical CS Elite RPA Pilots

Race: Human

Alignment: Scrupulous, Unprincipled, or Anarchist, occasionally, Aberrant or Miscreant.

Attributes: I.Q.: 14, M.E.: 14, M.A.: 12, P.S.: 10, P.P.: 13, P.E.: 13, P.B.: 10, Spd: 20

Hit Points: 40; **S.D.C.:** 50

Height: 5 feet 10 inches (1.78 m); **Weight:** 160 lbs (72.6 kg).

Average Age: 20-25

General Disposition: Cocky, self-assured and brash. These are the hot doggers of the RPA Corps, and they know it. That they have been chosen to pilot experimental weaponry and vehicles in a top-secret mission only fuels their excitement. That said, they also have a strong respect for team cohesion, and don’t razz their teammates too hard. They also follow their commander’s orders without question and to the letter. They may play hard, but they work even harder.

Average Experience Level: 4th to 6th level Coalition Elite RPA (Robot Power Armor) Pilot.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (+10%), Radio: Scramblers, Pilot Automobile (+10%), Pilot Hovercraft (+10%), Pilot Tank & APCs (+15%), Pilot Robots and Power Armor (+10%), Pilot Jet Packs (+10%), Navigation (+10%), Robot Combat: Elite, Read Sensory Equipment (+15%), Weapon Systems (+15%), Running, Climbing, Body Building & Weight Lifting,

Boxing, Wrestling, Wilderness Survival, W.P.: Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert, Power Armor Elite Combat Training.

Attacks Per Melee: Four or five (6 in robot or power armor).

Combat Bonuses: +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +5 to parry, +5 to dodge, +2 to strike.

Power Armor Combat Bonuses (in addition to normal combat bonuses): +2 attacks per melee, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge on ground, +5 to dodge while flying (if applicable), +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact, critical strike, punch: 1D6 M.D., kick: 1D6 M.D. leap kick: 2D6 M.D. (counts as *two* attacks), body flip/throw: 1D4 M.D., body block/tackle: 1D6 M.D. (counts as *two* attacks).

Weapons:

CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle: Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

C-20 Laser Pistol: Mega-Damage: 2D6, Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee. Range: 800 feet (244 m). Payload: 30 shots per long E-Clip.

Extra Ammo: 16 long E-Clips.

Body Armor: CA-4 Standard “Dead Boy” Armor: Armor: Head/Helmet — 70 M.D.C., Arms — 60 M.D.C. each, Legs — 80 M.D.C. each, Main Body — 100 M.D.C. or Power Armor (SAMAS or other; G.M.’s choice).

Other Equipment: Power Armor or CS robot vehicle.

Glitter Boy Killers (2)

Crew: One

M.D.C. by Location:

* Hands (2) — 35 each

Lower Arms (2) — 110 each

* Upper Arms (2; thin) — 55 each

* Forearm Plasma Gun (1; left) — 35

* Forearm Ion Gun (1; left) — 15

* Forearm Grenade Launcher (1; right) — 20

Small Forearm Vibro-Blades (2) — 50 each

Large Forearm Vibro-Blades (2) — 90 each

* Extra Gun Arms (2; shoulders) — 45 each

Triple Barrel Laser Turret (1; back) — 80

Legs (2) — 230 Each

Feet (2) — 100 each

* Mini-Tube Mini-Missile Launchers (10; shoulders) — 10 each

Secondary Sensor Clusters (2; chest) — 45 each

** Head (Main Sensors) — 90

*** Main Body — 440

* A single asterisk indicates a small and difficult target to strike, requiring the attacker to make a “called shot,” but even then the attacker is -4 to strike.

** Destroying the head of the power armor will eliminate the main sensory system and optics, but does not impair the pilot. Two secondary sensor clusters located in the chest and shoulder area on either side of the head will compensate for the loss of the head sensors. Only if all three are destroyed must the pilot rely on his own human vision and senses and loses any power armor bonuses to strike, parry and dodge. The head is a small and difficult target to hit, tucked into the chest, between the two heavily plated shoulders. Thus, it can only be hit by a called shot at -3 to strike.

*** Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body shuts the armor down completely, rendering it useless.

Speed: Running: 100 mph/160 km. Leaping: 20 feet (6 m) with a short running start. Underwater: The unit can be made to swim at 6.4 mph/3.4 knots. It can also walk along the bottom of a body of water at a maximum of 25 mph (40 km).

Statistical Data: Height: 14 feet (4.3 m). Width: 7 feet (2.1 m). Length: 5 feet (1.5 m). Weight: Two tons. Physical Strength: P.S. of 40. Power System: Nuclear; 20 year life span.

Forearm Plasma Gun (1): Mega-Damage: 6D6 per single blast or 1D6X10 if both the plasma gun and ion gun are fired at the same target simultaneously. Counts as *one* melee attack. Range: 1,600 feet (488 km). Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot’s combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee round. Payload: Effectively unlimited; tied to armor’s power supply.

Forearm Ion Gun (1): Mega-Damage: 3D6 per single blast or 1D6X10 if both the plasma gun and ion gun are fired at the same target simultaneously. Counts as *one* melee attack. Range: 1,200 feet (366 m). Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot’s combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee round. Payload: Effectively unlimited; tied to armor’s power supply.

Forearm Grenade Launcher (1): Mega-Damage: 6D6 to a 12 feet (3.6 m) blast radius. Range: 1,200 feet (366 m). Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot’s combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee round, either one at a time or in volleys of two (counts as one attack). Payload: 40 grenades.

Strike Force Durango Power Armor & Robot Vehicles

The units deployed as part of Strike Force Durango have all been retrofitted to have all distinctive Coalition markings (i.e., skull decorations, extraneous spikes and flanges, etc.) removed so the Xiticix do not recognize them as Coalition machines. Nobody is sure if the ploy will work or not (probably not), but they are willing to give it a try anyway.

These unit types in particular are part of a new field test to see which Coalition mecha and vehicles will fare best against the Xiticix. Since the Coalition can not hit the bugs with a full court press (yet), they have to make the best of what they can with pinpoint strikes. To that end, they wish only to use the units best suited for anti-Xiticix incursions. Thus, while Strike Force Durango’s primary mission is the elimination of the Free Thinkers and the retrieval of the stolen Lone Star information, their secondary mission is to evaluate the field-readiness of their respective units against the Xiticix.

The following are *Quick Stats* (summaries) for some of the units used by Durango. For more detailed descriptions of these units, please refer to the **Coalition War Campaign™** sourcebook.

Forearm Vibro-Blades (4): Mega-Damage: 3D6 from large blade, 2D6 from small blade, 5D6 from “double blade” strike.

Extra Weapon Arms (2): Mega-Damage: 4D6 for a 40 round burst, 2D6 for a 20 round burst. Range: 4,000 feet (1,220 m). Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot’s combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee round. Payload: 3,200 rounds each (enough for 80 40-round bursts, or 160 20-round bursts).

Triple Barrel Laser Turret (1): Mega-Damage: 2D6 per single laser blast or 6D6 if all three fire simultaneously at the same target. Counts as *one* attack. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot’s number of combined attacks per melee round. Payload: Effectively unlimited; tied to the armor’s power supply.

Mini-Tube Mini-Missile Launchers (10): Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 (armor piercing), 1D6x10 (Plasma). Range: One Mile (1.6 km). Rate of Fire: Single shot or volleys of two, four, five, or all ten. Payload: Ten total.

Hand to Hand Combat: Normal Punch or Kick: 1D6 M.D. Power Punch: 2D6 M.D (counts as two attacks). Vibro-Blade Strike (Single Blade): 3D6 or 2D6 M.D. Vibro-Blade Strike (Double Blade): 5D6 M.D. Vibro-Blade Power Strike (Double Blade): 1D6x10 M.D. (counts as two attacks). Leap Kick: 2D6 M.D. (counts as two attacks). Body Flip/Throw: 1D4 M.D. Body Block/Tackle: 1D6 M.D.

Special Forces “Striker” SAMAS (2)

Crew: One

M.D.C. by Location:

- * Shoulder Wings (2) — 80 each
- * Wing Mini-Missile Launchers (6 total) — 8 each
- * Chest Mini-Missile Launchers (6 total) — 8 each
- * Forearms with Missile Launchers (2) — 80 each
- Upper Arms (2) — 70 each
- * Hands (2) — 25 each
- Legs (2) — 130 each
- Main Rear Jets (2) — 60 each
- Lower Maneuvering Jets (3) — 30 each
- Intake Jets (2; top) — 50 each
- * CTT-P40 Rifle — 100
- ** Head — 90
- *** Main Body — 325

* A single asterisk indicates a small and difficult target to strike, requiring the attacker to make a “called shot,” but even then the attacker is -4 to strike.

** Destroying the head of the power armor will eliminate all forms of optical enhancement and sensory systems. The pilot must then rely on his own human vision and senses, and loses all power armor combat bonuses. The head is a small and difficult target to hit, shielded by the air intake tubes. Thus, it can only be hit by a called shot at -3 to strike.

*** Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body shuts the armor down completely, rendering it useless. **Note:** Destroying a wing makes flight impossible. However, even with no wings, the unit can still make jet-powered leaps and hover stationary above the ground.

Speed: Running: 70 mph (112.6 km). Leaping: 20 feet (6.1 m). A jet-propelled leap has a range of 100 feet (30.5 m) high and 200 feet (61 m) out. Flying: 330 mph (528 km). Maximum altitude: 6,000 feet (1,829 m). Indefinite range with rest

stops every few hours. Otherwise, the jets overheat. Underwater: The unit can swim at 4 mph/6.4 kph and can walk along the bottom of a body of water at 17.5 mph/28 km. Using its jet thrusters, the unit can travel on the surface of water at 50 mph/80 km and underwater at 40 mph/64 km.

Statistical Data: Height: 10.6 feet (3.25 m). Width: 3.5 feet (1.06 m) wings down, 12 feet (3.6 m) wings extended. Weight: 600 lbs (270 kg) without rifle. Physical Strength: Equal to a P.S. of 36. Cargo: None. Power System: Nuclear; 20 year life span.

Weapons:

CTT-P40 Particle Beam Cannon: Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 per single blast. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Rate of Fire: Equal to pilot’s combined number of attacks per melee round. Payload: Effectively unlimited; draws on suit’s nuclear reactor.

Striker-6 Mini-Missile Wing Launchers: Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 (armor piercing), 1D6x10. Range: One mile (1.6 km). Rate of Fire: Single shot or volleys of two, four, or six. Payload: Six total; three per wing.

Striker-6 Mini-Missile Chest Launchers: Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 (armor piercing), 1D6x10. Range: One mile (1.6 km). Rate of Fire: Single shot or volleys of two, three, or six. Payload: Six total.

Striker-8 Forearm Mini-Missile System: Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 (armor piercing), 1D6x10. Range: One mile (1.6 km). Rate of Fire: Single shot or volleys of two, four, or six. Payload: Sixteen total, eight per arm.

Hand to Hand Combat: The pilot can engage in Mega-Damage hand to hand combat. For details, see *Basic and Elite Power Armor Combat Training* on page 45 of the **Rifts® RPG** for combat bonuses.

Sensor System: This unit has an extensive optical system that confers to the pilot a bonus of +1 to initiative, +1 to strike and +1 to dodge, in addition to its standard power armor targeting computer bonus and Elite Power Armor Training bonuses.

CR-004 Spider-Skull Walkers (1 or 2)

Crew: One pilot, one gunner, up to two passengers or prisoners.

M.D.C. by Location:

- Triple-Barreled Rail Guns (2) — 100 each
- Laser Turret (1; undercarriage) - 80
- Mini-Missile Launchers (2; side) — 100 each
- Legs (6) — 100 each
- Leg Lights (6) — 5 each
- Rear Jet Thrusters (2) — 50 each
- * Eye Searchlights (2) — 20 each
- * Sensor Clusters (6; rear) — 25 each
- *** Main Body/Skull — 280
- Reinforced Crew Compartment — 150

* A single asterisk indicates a small and difficult target to strike, requiring the attacker to make a “called shot,” but even then the attacker is -4 to strike.

*** Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body shuts the vehicle down completely, rendering it useless.

Note: This unit’s large, skull-like head is not a head per se, but the main body.

Sensor Note: In combat terms, it is effectively impossible to blind or knockout all of this unit’s sensors.

Leg Note: This unit can lose one leg on each side and retain its balance, but speed will suffer by 15%.

Speed: Running: 100 mph (160.5 km). Leaping: 10 feet (3 m) high and 20 feet (6 m) across. Underwater: The unit can walk along the bottom of a body of water at 25 mph (40 km). It can also use its thrusters to scoot through water at 10 mph (16 km).

Statistical Data: Height: 12 feet (3.6 m). Width: The main body is 7 feet (2.1 m) wide, but with legs extended the unit is 17 feet (5.1 m) wide. Length: The main body is 12 feet (3.6 m) long, but with legs extended the unit is 17 feet (5.1 m) long. Weight: 12 tons fully loaded. Physical Strength: Not applicable. Cargo: Storage space of about 4x4x4 feet (1.2 m) in addition to a weapons locker that holds six CP-40 laser rifles, two C-50 Dragonfire rifles, 24 standard E-Clips, and two smoke grenades. Power System: Nuclear; 25 year life span.

Weapons:

C-104 Spider Tri-Barrel Rail Guns (2): Mega-Damage: One 60 round burst inflicts 1D4x10; both guns may fire simultaneously on the same target for 2D4x10 (counts as *one* attack). Range: 6,000 feet (1,828 m). Rate of Fire: Equal to pilot's combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Payload: 10,000 rounds per gun (166 60 round bursts). However, both of the units of Strike Force Durango have been in the field for a while, and are both down to about half of their ammo capacity for these weapons.

CR-2T Laser Turret (1): Mega-Damage: 5D6 per dual blast. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot's combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Payload: Effectively unlimited; tied to the unit's power source.

Mini-Missile Launchers (2): Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 (plasma). Range: One mile (1.6 km). Rate of Fire: Single shot or volleys of two, three, or four. Payload: 20 mini-missiles total; ten per launcher.

Smoke Dispenser: A smoke dispensing unit in the rear undercarriage can release a dense cloud of smoke that will cover a 60 foot (18.3 m) diameter behind it. It can also release tear gas as an alternative, anti-personnel weapon. Payload: Eight total. Four smoke and four tear gas.

Hand to Hand Combat: Leg Strike: 2D4 M.D. Stomp: 1D6 M.D. Head Butt: 1D6 M.D. Leaping Body Block/Ram: 3D6 M.D. with a 40% chance of knocking its opponent to the ground. The victim loses initiative and two melee attacks/actions.

Special Sensory Systems: This unit has a wide variety of enhanced optics and other sensor packages that confer upon the pilot and gunner a bonus of +1 to initiative and +1 to dodge. It also gives the pilot a base 44% +2% per level to prowl/hide with the vehicle.

CR-005 Scorpion-Skull Walker (1)

Crew: One pilot, one gunner, up to one passenger.

M.D.C. by Location:

Gatling Rail Guns (3; tail) — 80 each

* Tail Lasers (2; tail) — 40 each

Multiple Mini-Missile Launcher (1; tail) — 100

Secondary Mini-Missile Launchers (2; tail) — 40 each

* Double-Barreled Head Lasers (2 pair; head) — 40 each

Giant Pincers (2) — 120 each

Legs (6) — 120 each

* Eye Searchlights (2) — 20 each

* Smoke Dispenser (1; grille/teeth of head) — 20

* Eyebrow Cameras (4; two above each eye) — 5 each

* Sensor Cluster (1; nose) — 35

Tail Segments (3; including weapon segment) — 180 each

** Head (crew area) — 180

*** Main Body/Skull — 200

Reinforced Crew Compartment — 150

* A single asterisk indicates a small and difficult target to strike, requiring the attacker to make a "called shot," but even then the attacker is -5 to strike.

** Destroying the head of the vehicle will destroy all sensor and optic systems and exposes the inner crew compartment, making the crew vulnerable to further attack. Furthermore, all robot combat bonuses are lost. Reduce the number of attacks per melee round and speed by half!

*** Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body shuts the vehicle down completely, rendering it useless.

Leg Note: This unit can lose one or two legs and not be unbalanced, but speed suffers by 15%. Losing three legs reduces speed by 50%.

Speed: Running: 50 mph (80.4 km). Leaping: Not possible. Underwater: This unit can walk underwater at 12.5 mph (20 km).

Statistical Data: Height: 5 feet (1.5 m); when running, the legs protrude an additional 3 feet (0.9 m). Width: The skull is 6 feet (1.8 m) wide, but with legs extended the whole unit is 18 feet (5.4 m) wide. Length: 25 feet (7.6 m) with tail completely extended flat. Body of the skull is 8 feet (2.4 m) long. Weight: 14 tons. Physical Strength: Equal to a P.S. of 45. Cargo: None. Power System: Nuclear; 25 year life span.

Weapons:

Tail Rail Guns (3): Mega-Damage: A 40 round burst from one gun inflicts 1D4x10. Two guns firing simultaneously at the same target inflict 2D4x10, and three guns trained on the same target inflict 3D4x10. Range: 4,000 feet (1,200 m). Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot's combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee round. Payload: 8,000 rounds per weapon (or, 200 bursts per weapon)

Tail Lasers (2): Mega-Damage: 3D6 per single blast or 6D6 per simultaneous double blast. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot's combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Payload: Effectively unlimited; tied to unit's power source.

Tail Multiple Mini-Missile Launchers (1): Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 (plasma). Range: One mile (1.6 km). Rate of Fire: Single shot or volleys of two, three or four. Payload: 18 mini-missiles, total.

Tail Mini-Missile Launcher (2): Mega-Damage: 1D6x10 (plasma) Range: One mile (1.6 km). Rate of Fire: Single shot or volleys of two, three, or four. Payload: Ten total; five per launcher.

Skull-Mounted Double-Barreled Lasers (2): Mega-Damage: 4D6 per weapon. Simultaneous double blast inflicts 8D6. Range: 2,000 feet (610 m). Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot's combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee. Payload: Effectively unlimited; tied to power source.

Smoke Dispenser.

CS Operations

In Xiticix Territory

The Coalition Military has at least one hundred different squads, reconnaissance teams, Rangers, Commandos, strike teams, platoons and intelligence companies operating in and around the Xiticix Hivelands of Minnesota and Manitoba at any given time. That's 1400-2200 field troops, not including support teams, base personnel and other "official" military operations. As noted earlier, the CS tries to keep a low profile in the Hivelands — they have no desire to provoke a war with millions of Xiticix before they are ready for it. Moreover, the Manitoba and Minnesota regions are hotbeds of trouble and insurrection. The Xiticix dominate the north while Tolkeen and a number of other independent kingdom who use magic are scattered throughout the region — a cesspool of villainy and monsters as far as the CS is concerned. Consequently, until the CS officially declared war on Tolkeen (located on the site of pre-Rifts Minneapolis), the military had to — paraphrasing pre-Rifts President Teddy Roosevelt — “tread lightly while carrying a big stick.” What this meant is that the CS maintained a low profile while establishing a military network of secret outposts, weapon caches, spies, informants, mercenaries, and undercover operatives. Or as General Cabot once commented, “We have woven a net over the region so quietly and carefully that the inhabitants neither see it nor realize they are already trapped. All that remains is for us to draw the net closed and the enemy is ours for the taking.” This ten year program was specifically to study, assess, infiltrate and undermine the enemy.

The Primary Target of this secret plot was Tolkeen and the D-Bee-loving and sorcery-based kingdoms who associate with them. The Secondary Target: The alien insect race known as the Xiticix.

To this end a handful of small CS outposts and a couple of military bases were built at strategic locations outside the zone of conflict to avoid the appearance of impropriety or military build-up. Meanwhile, hundreds of safe-houses, weapon caches, CS sympathizers, informants and allies (such as Psi-Stalkers and fellow human supremacists) were established while the CS spies, agents and intelligence studied the enemy. Scrutinized is a more accurate word. The people of Tolkeen, the surrounding human and D-Bee communities, and the Xiticix were placed under a secret, high-powered microscope. Their every move and activity noted, appraised and logged. Strengths and weaknesses were analyzed relentlessly, behavioral and social patterns studied for avenues to be exploited, strategic locations established and military tactics formulated.

With the official Declaration of War against the Kingdom of Tolkeen, the Coalition Military has drawn the strings of its net tighter as they take their positions at strategic points and ready themselves for all-out war. This has left the northern outposts and CS bases to offer limited support and communications in the war effort against Tolkeen, but more importantly, to con-

tinue to observe and maintain a holding action against the Secondary Target: The Xiticix.

CS Special Ops

Game Masters, this is an opportunity to introduce CS characters (NPCs and player characters) into the campaign and even into the player group. These secret CS operatives have been in place for years, especially in and around Tolkeen, so friendly trappers, scouts or mercenaries might really be CS agents. Depending on the individual, this character might respect and sympathize with no his faux teammates with intention or desire to see them get caught in the middle. For others, such groups are simply a means to an end, and whatever happens to them, good or bad, happens. He doesn't really care. Then there are agents who are not only using the adventurer group or freedom fighters they associate with, but plan to betray them and see them pay for their crimes against the CS. Even CS undercover agents who have grown to care about the people they are using or associating with (most of whom would be considered dissidents and Enemies of the States), will remain loyal to the Coalition States. If forced to pick sides, the CS will win 99 out of a hundred times. However, they are likely to bend the rules, make allowances, and even try to help “friends” on the wrong side of the law.

Hearts & Minds

The CS soldiers who have seen D-Bees, sorcerers and creatures of magic perform great acts of selflessness and heroics are likely to come away with a different view of the world and nonhumans than the standard CS propaganda. They are more likely to be (secretly) more tolerant, compassionate and even sympathetic. They will see the “human” side of these people — their struggles, fears, hopes and dreams. They will experience firsthand, their intelligence, loyalty, sacrifice, and courage. The inhuman will suddenly have names and faces, and qualities that can be understood and respected. Once the veneer of “evil monster” is stripped away, D-Bees and sorcerers will be viewed as “people,” and the knee-jerk reaction will be to show them the same respect and considerations one would show any fellow human being.

This is exactly why the CS propaganda machine works so hard to paint D-Bees and practitioners of magic as nameless, faceless monsters. They demonize them, so people will not stop to think of them as sympathetic people or kindred spirits. The CS's rulers wants their people, and soldiers in particular, to be blinded by hate and fear so they do not try to see anything more than a dangerous monster to be killed before it kills them. Faceless, nameless monsters are easy to fear, hate and destroy. By contrast, it is much more difficult to hate and kill people one can relate to and feel even the slightest sense of familiarity and compassion for.

However, CS troops in the field, especially small teams and squads out on their own or undercover can not escape comingling with unsavory nonhumans, and are all too often deeply touched by what they see and experience. To this end, the CS Military tries to put the most vehemently prejudiced and heavily indoctrinated soldiers in these difficult environments. Part of their preparations include indoctrination about how they may come to feel unwarranted camaraderie and sympathetic feeling toward nonhumans due to their isolation, the stress of the situation and being out in a hostile, enemy environment for days, weeks or months on their own.

Upon the soldiers' return, they undergo debriefing sessions that last hours, sometimes days. The debriefing focuses first on intelligence, the gathering of information that can be used by the Coalition Military. The longest part, however, focuses on what the Military calls "reclamation." The lead officer in charge of the debriefing (typically a psychologist and one of a two or three man team assigned to each soldier) explains how the desperate situation these "valiant and loyal" CS soldiers have been forced to endure —alone, away from their loved ones and the security of CS society and structure — may have "temporarily" caused them to suffer from an altered state of mind. Or forced to adopt an abhorrent and loathsome lifestyle to survive and/or to preserve their undercover identity. As far as the CS is concerned, it is disturbing but okay to have lost one's bearings in the wilderness and/or to have said and done things ("for the good of their nation") to fulfill their assignment. They are heroes!

The members of the debriefing team go on to explain that under those disorienting and high stress conditions, coming to think of nonhumans and/or practitioners of magic as "allies" and even "friends" who could be trusted and respected is okay and natural. In fact, they encourage the soldiers to talk about their feelings, to confess their thoughts and concerns, and even cry. (Everything is recorded for future evaluation, of course.) It might come as a surprise to those who demonize the Coalition States, but these soldiers are not persecuted by the CS. It really is okay to have lost their bearings or do the unthinkable under such duress. Okay, provided that the soldier, now that he or she is safely back in the fold, realizes how *wrong* that thinking was. That it was basically war-inflicted stress and deprivation that caused these *delusions* and *disorientation*. As long as the soldier convincingly spouts the party line and spits on the names of those he may have once considered allies, he is good to go. Those who are not so convincing and who seem to harbor sympathetic feelings for the enemy, are reassigned away from combat duty, watched (like a hawk) for dangerous deviant behavior (i.e. compassion toward D-Bees) and may be required to undergo regular "orientation" meetings with a therapist to overcome the long-term effects of this "traumatic experience." Those who openly question or defy the Coalition Military or Government are branded traitors and imprisoned for 20 years to life, or executed. Those who aid and abet nonhumans, practitioners of magic, or any enemy of the States, are branded traitors, as are deserters. If captured, they are to be brought to (a humiliating) trial and forced to pay for their crimes; typically with a public execution. However, most deserters and traitors never make it to trial, and end up committing suicide, are killed trying to escape or perish in an unfortunate accident.

On the other hand, there will be CS soldiers who have seen and experienced the same things, but walk away more con-

vinced than ever that D-Bees and practitioners of magic are monsters to be destroyed. Some of these men and women will be human supremacists for whom the things they see will only serve as reminders and reinforcement that these "creatures" are indeed inhuman monsters who must be wiped from the face of the Earth. That these beings are every bit as alien, frightening and dangerous to humankind as the Xiticix. Exactly the kind of thing the CS likes to hear.

Others, having seen up-close and personal the courage, intelligence and mystical or natural abilities these "inhuman creatures" possess, will find them more terrifying than ever. Fear and insecurity (and perhaps hate) provides these individuals with renewed conviction that these inhuman creatures must be destroyed, or at least contained and controlled. They reckon that such powerful and inhuman beings (sorcerers are lumped in with "monsters" and "inhuman creatures" because they possess frightening knowledge, powers and abilities beyond their comprehension) must see themselves as "superior to humans." How could they not? Thus, in the paranoid mind of the conspiracist, the frightened and the insecure, it is only a matter of time before these ... aliens, D-Bees, dragons, and sorcerers rise up to enslave or destroy mankind. Ultimately, these "monsters" are no different than the Xiticix. They may look more human, heck some look completely human and/or "pretend to be" innocent and compassionate, but they are *NOT* human and can not honestly relate to humans, or so the thinking goes. And that makes all the difference in the world. For those with small, frightened and suspicious minds, such inhumans are a threat to their power and place in the world. A threat best eliminated before it gets too strong.

Of course, it is easy to fake disdain for the inhuman and magical. Years of indoctrination make it easy to spout the slogans and sentiments expected by the authorities. And that's exactly what many CS soldiers do, while secretly harboring a new respect and compassion for the beings they are supposed to hate. Most conceal these feelings well and support the official government position. Some do not even let their spouses or friends know what they saw and feel for fear of reprisal. It saddens them to continue to take action against "the enemy," but most do. Two things keep them in line, one is fear, the other is usually a conviction that the CS still offers the best hope for humankind. The lesser of two evils. Others hope and pray that change is in the air, that someday the CS will change its policies regarding D-Bees and magic. The brave quietly, subtly try to make a difference. This can be done in many ways. One is to turn a blind eye to the activities of D-Bees and sorcerers whenever possible, another is to show prisoners and free D-Bees a modicum of respect and compassion. The most daring may (carefully) speak about D-Bees in a good light and question current CS policies. Some may even show D-Bees some measure of kindness and secretly do things to help refugees (i.e. leave food, medicine and basic supplies for them, warn them about in coming CS raids and other dangers, etc.).



Fort Barron

Troop Breakdown at Fort Barron

Army Corp with 11,590 troops/2 Divisions (Human):

1% RCSG

1% CS Commandos

2% CS Nautical Specialists

2% CS Cyborg Strike Troopers

3% CS Military Specialists

5% CS Technical Officers

4% EOD Specialists

6% CS Psi-Stalkers

8% RPA "Fly Boy" Aces

12% CS Rangers

25% RPA Elite/SAMAS/Power Armor & Robot Pilots

31% Grunts/Soldiers



Additional Forces (nonhuman):

Two Brigades of Skelebots (4440)

One Battalion of Dog Boys (640)

Two Battalions of hired, freelance Wilderness Scouts and Agents (1280); 90% Psi-Stalkers, half of which are members of the Spider Tribe.

Note: The sizeable number of Skelebots at Forts Barron and Perrion are present to counter a Xiticix swarm and to engage any enemy who might attack en mass. They are also sent on raids and unmanned seek and destroy missions. Likewise, Fort Barron has a large number of armored ground, air and power armor companies, because the heavy artillery and armor is necessary to counter an enemy like the Xiticix. It is estimated that in a full-scale war, the advanced weapons and mobile armored units at Fort Barron could handle as many as 70,000-90,000 Xiticix. Any greater number will overrun the base and the troops will be forced to retreat with an estimated 50-75% casualty rate.

The troops and combat vehicles at Fort Barron are designated for three primary combat roles: Scouting and intelligence, quick response (SAMAS and cycles), and armored defense (tanks, power armor and robots). Rescue, support, communications and other operations are secondary.

Notable Weapons & Vehicles Consignment:

All the latest body armor and weapons.

Combat Ground Vehicles:

60 CTX-50 "Line Backer" Heavy Tanks

60 CTX-52 "Sky Sweeper" Hover Tanks

12 Mark VII "Slayer" APCs

4 Mark IX EPC

Combat Robots:

6 IAR-3 Skull Smashers

24 CR-005 Scorpion-Skull Walkers

24 CR-004 Scout Spider Walkers

60 IAR-4 Hellraisers

84 IAR-5 Hellfire (Scout & Light Assault)

Air Combat Vehicles:

10 CS Command Cars

24 CS Skull Patrol Cars

72 CS Wind Jammer Sky Cycles

144 CS Warbird Rocket Cycles

144 CS Scout Rocket Cycles

Power Armor:

24 Special Forces "Striker" SAMAS

96 Super SAMAS

196 "Smiling Jack" SAMAS

48 Maulers

48 Terror Troopers

Skelebots (4440)

12 Centaur Skelebots (experimental)

144 Hellion Skelebots (experimental)

600 Skelebot Hunters (experimental)

1400 Old Style Skelebots

2284 New Style Skelebots

The thousands of CS Special Ops soldiers, Strike Forces, Rangers, spies, scouts, agents, and operatives in and around the Hivelands could not be effective left entirely on their own, and need a base of operations. A place to go where they can resupply, seek medical treatment, report their findings and most importantly, seek refuge. A safe haven where soldiers can come in

from the field, debrief, rest and recuperate. **Fort Barron** and **Fort Perrion** are two such facilities. Both serve as safe harbors in a hostile land and as a staging ground for covert operations in enemy territory.

Fort Barron is an Intelligence operation designed to observe, study and, when possible, quietly undermine the enemy. It is also the larger of the two CS Base Camps and the more heavily depended upon by troops in the field. Located in hostile territory, Fort Barron is much more heavily fortified than most Intelligence Outposts and is equipped with M.D.C. bunkers, an underground base complex and a wide assortment of armored ground and air vehicles, from CS tanks and APCs to small aircraft and power armor troops for quick response, rescue and precision strikes.

In addition to CS troops, the Fort Commander has been authorized (even encouraged) to use “freelance” help in undermining the enemy. This includes the hiring of mercenaries and adventurers to engage in scouting as well as some of the most daring and dangerous military actions against the Xiticix. Outsiders are used because they are seen as cheap and “expendable.” Of course, only humans and Psi-Stalkers are hired, although CS Officers doing the hiring usually deal with one or two *representatives* from a mercenary team and have found it prudent to avoid asking too many prying questions. Consequently, while no D-Bee or practitioner of magic is “officially” on the CS payroll, they may actually be silent and invisible members of the groups hired to kill Xiticix, raid their outposts, bushwack patrols and explore their hives.

It should come to no one’s surprise that the Coalition Military can be duplicitous and treacherous employers who will use many excuses for not paying their hired guns. One of the most common practices is to hire groups of mercs and adventurers and then refuse to pay, or worse, gun them down, because they are dangerous criminals who fraternize with “enemies of the States” — i.e. they have (even one) D-Bees and/or practitioners of magic in the group. Those who are to be rebuked, threatened and denied payment are the lucky ones and should walk away quickly without thoughts of retribution, and count their blessings. Any protests or subsequent acts of revenge will get them killed on the spot or mark the group as wanted criminals with a price on their heads. This means both CS troops and other “freelance agents” (bounty hunters, and other mercenaries, adventurers, bandits and opportunists) will be gunning for them. And the bounty is always “dead or alive.” The least fortunate will be apprehended, arrested, tried and executed before they know what hit them. This having been said, human supremacists and groups truly composed entirely of humans can find dangerous but gainful employment. The CS can be amazingly loyal and generous to those they trust and like.

Native Americans, Psi-Stalkers, Wilderness Scouts, and Woodsmen-Trappers are among the Coalition’s favorite scouts and bushwackers. Indian Warriors, many of whom draw upon magic forces, are the one group that the Coalition does not seem to persecute or cheat for using magic. The logic for this is that, 1) these Native American “warriors” do not actually use magic (i.e. cast spells) but believe in a “primitive spiritualism,” an ancient religious belief to “motivate and inspire” them. 2) They are a primitive people who offer no (or minimal) threat to the CS, and 3) they are used in a limited capacity in a wilderness

no-man’s land where rules can be bent and worries dismissed. This liberal attitude would not be tolerated in any of the States themselves or among a more formal or larger military operation such as the ones underway at Tolkeen and Free Quebec. However, in the New West and wilds of the Northlands, there is much greater latitude.

Major Samuel Haim

Base Commander at Fort Barron

Major Samuel Haim is a decorated officer who has fought in a number of notable military campaigns, including two alongside the notorious *General Ross Underhill*. He is capable, resourceful and a reasonably good tactician who tends to be conservative and play the odds. However, he has just enough daring and ingenuity to make a surprise move or take a risk to win the day, and set him a notch above the norm. This makes him a strong, dependable leader who can get the job done without great losses of men or resources. These qualities make him the ideal officer to command a remote wilderness outpost that must be self-sufficient, cautious and pragmatic, yet at the same time have a certain amount of flexibility, flare and motivation, maintain good morale and achieve the goals of the High Command.

The Major ranks among the top 10 percent of the Coalition’s best officers and was expected to make General by age 40. However, Major Haim does not like playing politics and hates the games, backstabbing and boot-licking necessary to rise up through the Military ranks quickly. He is a career soldier content with his station in life. He *volunteered* for the post at Fort Barron (an assignment most of his peers would consider a step down) and has passed up two promotions to keep it.

Fort Barron provides Major Haim with the peace of mind and stability he wants in life. “Peace and stability” may sound like inappropriate words to describe a post in a hostile wilderness less than two hundred miles (320 km) from a major war zone and 50 miles (80 km) from the Xiticix’s central hive, but the Major is an experienced veteran who accepts and welcomes adversity and military duty. He’s not afraid of combat or making tough decisions; what he hates is being second-guessed, game playing and interference from superiors. The post at Fort Barron is a straightforward, no nonsense military operation, which is exactly what he loves. No garbage from the brass, no politics, a reasonable amount of autonomy and as close to as one can get to true, absolute authority in the Coalition Military. The Major knows exactly what is expected of him, and what to do to keep the Brass happy, and is making an important contribution to the war effort against the Xiticix. He is also the type of officer who excels when left to his own device and cares about the job and his men, as opposed to rank, recognition and glory.

Major Samuel Haim is a good man and a strong leader. He is reasonably loyal to the Coalition Military and the country he loves and serves. He believes the Coalition States are mankind’s best hope for the future and are fundamentally sound. It is some of the Military and political leaders, and their policies, that he sometimes disagrees with. For one, Major Haim is no longer an avid human supremacist. He has seen far too much to believe that all D-Bees are mindless monsters out to usurp humankind, or that all practitioners of magic are power-crazed madmen out to enslave the world. However, Major Haim is a soldier through

and through, and does as he is commanded, whether he personally agrees with the decision or not. Still, whenever he feels it is appropriate (and will go unnoticed), he will bend the rules to cut his men some slack, and will do little things under the guise of following orders or living by the letter of an order to give D-Bees and refugees an opportunity to escape or benefit from his actions.

The Psi-Stalkers like and respect this man, even the Pony-Tail Tribe. Likewise, many D-Bees regard him as reasonably fair and honorable. As for the vast majority of his men, they deeply respect, like, and obey their Commander. They trust his judgement and honor his decisions. Of course, there are a tiny number of malcontents (under 2%) who see the Major as soft and too conservative. They would like to see him removed and a more hawkish leader put in his place. These malcontents tend to be the silent minority and kept in line (and from causing trouble) by the Major's supporters — many of whom would gladly lie and bend the rules to protect their Commander from unfair accusations and attacks from the disenfranchised, vengeful or politically ambitious. Haim would never ask for or endorse such actions, but he would be touched and gratified by the gestures if he knew of them.

Major Haim hates sending soldiers into the Xiticix Hive, even volunteers, because he knows he is sending them to their doom. However, he accepts the necessity of these suicide missions and the CS has learned invaluable information from their sacrifices. Haim has analyzed most of these disturbing video-disks to help identify the strengths and vulnerabilities of the enemy. He has been a pivotal force in developing strategies and tactics against the Xiticix and is one of the foremost CS authorities on the monsters.

The Major applauds the actions of the Lazlo Xiticix Fighters and is glad that it is they and not Coalition troops going up against the alien swarms. This sentiment is seen as a positive human supremacist attitude — “let the sorcerers, freaks and aliens destroy each other” — but that is not Major Haim's rationale. He is a pragmatic soldier who knows the unique powers of magic and the abilities of mutants and D-Bees make them far better equipped for the task at hand. If left to the Coalition Military, the loss of CS lives would be twice as high and the success of the operation less certain. Even if the Lazlo troops fail, they will have chopped the enemy down so severely that the Coalition Military, led by his elite forces, can step in to easily finish the job.

The only question in Major Haim's mind is what will come of him and his men after the Xiticix threat is eliminated. Forts Barron and Perrion are likely to remain in place, but who will be the new enemy? D-Bees? Magic based communities? Lazlo? He hopes it will be the Black Market, bandits and/or lake pirates, because he will regret having to send his men against an (albeit nonhuman) enemy he respects. Unfortunately, just as he is an expert at fighting Xiticix, he is also an expert on the region, Psi-Stalkers, D-Bees, guerilla combat and intelligence operations. Another likely assignment once the Xiticix threat and War with Tolkeen comes to an end, is that he will be left in charge of keeping peace in the region and guaranteeing the safety of the CS settlements that are likely to be established in this territory earmarked for CS expansion. The worst part of that job will be assisting in the “mopping up” after the war. An assignment that

will entail hunting down and terminating Tolkeen rebels, criminals, dissidents, and other enemies of the States, including innocent D-Bees, females and children among them.

Major Samuel Haim Intelligence Officer and Base Commander at Fort Barron

Alignment: Unprincipled

Attributes: I.Q. 17, M.E. 13, M.A. 20, P.S. 21, P.P. 19, P.E. 15, P.B. 11, Spd. 14

Hit Points: 55; **S.D.C.:** 30

Weight: 168 lbs (75.6 kg); **Height:** Six feet, two inches (1.88 m)

Age: 42

P.P.E.: 9

Disposition: Strong, confident, fair, compassionate. The welfare of his men comes second only to the welfare of the nation he serves.

Experience Level: 9th level Military Specialist (Intelligence), and rapidly approaching 10th level.

Magic Knowledge: None

Psionic Powers: None

Skills of Note: Body Building, Gymnastics, General Athletics, Climbing 97%/92%, Swimming 97%, Demolitions and Demolitions Disposal 92% each, Pilot Tanks and APCs 86%, Pilot Hovercraft 98%, Radio Basic 98%, Radio Scramblers 98%, Surveillance Systems 87%, TV & Video 97%, Disguise 66%, Intelligence 98%, Streetwise 74%, Interrogation Techniques 87%, Wilderness Survival 77%, Land Navigation 74%, Literacy: English 87%, Basic Math 90%.

Weapon Proficiencies: W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Bolt-Action Rifle, W.P. Knife and Sniper.

Combat Training: CS Officer — Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: Six

Bonuses: +4 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +6 to damage (S.D.C. damage; P.S. bonus), +2 to roll with impact/punch, +2 to pull punch, critical strike on roll of natural 18-20, judo body throw, all kick attacks, paired weapons and a 60% likelihood of evoking trust or intimidation.

Weapons: Favorite weapons include neural mace, vibro-knife, C-14 “Fire Breather,” C-50 “Dragonfire,” the CV-212 variable light frequency laser rifle and similar precision “sniper” weapons.

Bionics & Cybernetics: His left hand is a bio-system prosthetic to replace the one he lost in a battle early in his career. He also has a gyro-compass, clock calendar, fingerjack, amplified hearing, sound filtration system and one multi-optic eye.

Orion Greenfeld

“Hell, I dun been a workin’ for the Coalition for purty near thirty year, I tink. Dey not as bad as people say, at least not if you ain’t a D-Bee or wizard or sumting. No siree. Not dat I got anyting ‘gainst D-Bees or mages. Sum o’ my best friends ain’t been completely human, an’ I met my share of mages who dun alright by me. ‘Course, ya gotta watch dat kind of talk ‘round dem soldier boys, if ya know what I mean.”

“Sure I been huntin’ an’ ‘splorin’ an’ fightin’ in dees woods for my entire life, or close to it. Know ‘em as good as any Psi-Stalker, an’ dat ain’t no lie, ya kin ask ‘em. Dey tell you Orion is a wily ol’ coot as good as any Psi-Stalker. Yes siree,



ing legend among his fellow Wilderness Scouts and Hunter-Trappers.

Orion is a very affable and sincere individual, who usually says what he means and means what he says. Although he watches out and cares for others, he tends to watch out for himself first and is not above telling tall tales, little lies, and cheating at cards.

For example, he claims to know *all* of Canada and the northern United States like the back of his hand, but his real areas of expertise are the Manitoba and Ontario regions of Canada and the Dakotas, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan areas, all of which he really does know that well.

He claims to be a French Canadian although his accent has hints of several different languages. He also claims to have gone out into the woods to make his own way at age 14. Orion claims to be 50, but looks more like 65 or 70. Whatever his age, he is alert, clever, quick, healthy and strong as an ox.

Orion Greenfeld — Trapper-Woodsman

Alignment: Unprincipled

Attributes: I.Q. 14, M.E. 15, M.A. 24, P.S. 21, P.P. 20, P.E. 17, P.B. 10, Spd. 22

Hit Points: 53; **S.D.C.:** 30

Weight: 168 lbs (75.6 kg); **Height:** Six feet, two inches (1.88 m)

Age: Claims to be 50 (but looks sixty or seventy)

P.P.E.: 9

Disposition: Confident, fair, friendly and talkative. He likes being a celebrity and loves to tell stories about himself and his countless adventures. Most are very interesting and he genuinely knows a great deal (although he does “embellish”), but once Orion gets on a roll, it can be hard to shut him up. Orion also tends to be a typical rough and tumble Canadian woodsman who likes to roughhouse and kid around. Surprisingly, he rarely swears and does not drink. He’s a little crude, a little rough around the edges, and ornery when ticked off, but he knows his stuff and is good in a fight.

Experience Level: 11th level Trapper-Woodsman.

Magic Knowledge: Lore only.

Psionic Powers: None.

Skills of Note: Basic Math 90%, speak English/American 92%, speak Inuit and Euro 98%, but is an illiterate (can’t read or write), Lore: Demon & Monsters 95%, Lore: Animals 98%, Animal Husbandry 98%, Track Animals (+20%), Skin & Prepare Animal Hides (+25%), I.D. Plants & Fruits (+15%), Hunting, Fishing, General Athletics, Running, Climbing 95%/90%, Swimming 98%, Trap Construction, Trap/Mine Detection (+10%), Pilot Hovercycle 90%, Pilot Sail Boat 98%, Radio Basic 98%, Wilderness Survival 98%, and Land Navigation 98%. Plus, Cardsharp 68%, palming 75%, and prowl 85%.

Weapon Proficiencies: W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Bolt-Action Rifle, W.P. Knife and W.P. Blunt.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks per Melee: Six

Bonuses: +2 on initiative, +4 to strike, +5 to parry and dodge, +6 to damage (S.D.C. damage; P.S. bonus), +2 to roll with impact/punch, +5 to pull punch, critical strike on roll of natural 18-20, judo body throw, paired weapons, +1 to save vs possession, +2 to save vs poison and disease, +2 to save vs

me an’ dem are campadres from way back. I know every tribe and done sat with most every chief an’ shaman. So you need a guide in dere north country or Hivelands, I’m yer man. O’ dat ya kin be certain.”

One of Fort Haim’s regular informants and hired scouts is Orion Greenfeld, a somewhat eccentric and notorious Trapper-Woodsman. Orion has been regularly hired by Major Haim for the last 10 years, and has done a great deal of scouting and intelligence for the CS Military in Manitoba and Minnesota. Before that, Orion has worked on and off for many different CS Commanders and units for twenty years. Major Haim is his favorite, though, and he would consider doing almost anything to help the Fort Commander.

Orion remains on excellent terms with the CS forces stationed in Xiticix Territory, although he has not worked with them in the last couple of years. He is trusted and highly regarded. At least 90% of the officers know him by name and reputation, and 60% will know him personally. Even half of the soldiers and “doggie boys,” as Orion calls them, recognize the old codger.

Orion really does know all of the Psi-Stalker tribes in the region and is recognized by 98% of the leaders and 75% of all the rest. All know him by name and reputation as a trusted friend of the Psi-Stalker people. The cagey scout has even fought at the side of the Spider Tribe, battling Simvan, Xiticix and other enemies of “the people.” Likewise, Orion Greenfeld is known to most Native Americans in the region and is something of a liv-

cold and pain, +6 to save vs Horror Factor, and an 80% likelihood of evoking trust or intimidation.

Weapons of Note: Bolt-action hunting rifle (6D6 S.D.C.), .45 automatic pistol (4D6 S.D.C.) Vibro-knife, Wilk's 237 "Backup" Laser Pistol (3D6 or 6D6 M.D. per double blast; 500 feet/152 m range), C-50 "Dragonfire" assault Rifle and Grenade Launcher (a CS gift) and a Wilk's Laser Lance for skinning hides. He has six long E-Clips for each energy weapon, 144 rounds for each of his S.D.C. guns, 32 grenades for his C-50, four flares and two smoke grenades.

Armor: A suit of modified, non-environmental (no helmet) "Dead Boy" armor with 69 M.D.C. painted in greens and grays. Orion uses it "fer when I 'spect the fightin' gits hot an' heavy." It is a gift from Major Haim for the old scout's years of loyal service. Orion also has a suit of Urban Warrior armor.

Bionics & Cybernetics: Miraculously, none.

Layout of Fort Barron

Surface Level

Note: Other than a handful of sentry posts, the entire base is contained behind M.D.C. walls that stand 20 feet (6.1 m) tall. Average M.D.C. per 20 square feet (1.8 m) of wall is 50. Typical small doors are 200 M.D.C. (it's pointless to waste too much M.D.C. on the doors because an enemy can blast through the wall more easily). The walls define the borders of the base, provide reasonable protection and cover, and make for an impressively ominous structure (intimidation is part of the game).

The base (any base) is vulnerable to aerial assault, consequently, most surface structures are either sparsely staffed, minor M.D.C. structures (easily evacuated) or heavy, bunker style constructs that can take a reasonable amount of pounding. The true base — i.e. vital systems, power supply, life support, communications, living quarters, etc., are all underground.

1. Sentry Towers. These 20 foot (6.1 m) tall, 20 foot (6.1 m) in diameter towers stand near the compound like megalithic sentinels. All are strategically located to maximize the area they cover and to defend doors and access ways.

Crew: Eight man team. Each is occupied by a pair of Communication Officers, six Grunts/Gunners and six Skelebots (defenders). Another dozen humans or Skelebots can be accommodated if necessary.

M.D.C. of Tower: 2400 overall; roughly 60 M.D.C. per 20 square feet (1.8 m) when targeting one section of wall.

Sensor Systems: Radar (50 mile/80 km range; can identify and track 120 different targets or swarms simultaneously), and motion detectors (400 feet/122 m) from ground level to 100 feet (30.5 m) above the tower. Seismic ground sensors that can detect vibrations in the ground and identify the activity and approach of a field army (5000 or more foot soldiers), convoy of heavy vehicles (40 or more), and armor (20+ tanks, APCs and robots) up to two miles (3.2 km) away, as well as other seismic disturbances such as heavy explosives and missile bombardment up to 20 miles (32 km) away and earthquakes 100 miles (160 km) away.

Optics: Telescopic (6000 feet/1828 m), infrared and passive nightvision systems (4000 feet/1220 m), thermo-imaging (2000

feet/610 m) and video surveillance and recording (400 feet/122 m).

Weapon Systems:

- **Manned HF-36 Rail Gun Turrets (2; top):** 360 degree rotation, 120 degree arc of fire up and down, 40 round burst does 1D4x10 M.D., 4000 foot (1220 m) effective range, with an automatic feed and payload of 40,000 rounds (that's 1000 bursts) each.
- **Pop-out 24 Mini-Missile Launchers (2, middle, sides):** Standard Load: 2 smoke, 10 fragmentation (5D6 M.D.), 12 plasma (1D6x10 M.D.). Range: One mile (1.6 m). Rate of Fire: Volleys of 2, 4, or 6 at a time. Automatic, automated reload system take one melee round (15 seconds). Payload: 96 per each launcher. As many as 3840 more are stored safely underground, but may also be commandeered by power armor, 'bots and combat vehicles.
- **Double-Barreled Laser Turret (1):** 360 degree rotation, 120 degree arc of fire up and down, 4D6 M.D. per double blast, 4000 foot (1220 m) effective range. Payload is effectively unlimited.

2. The Twin Bunkers (a.k.a. the Skelebot Bunkers). The "front" of the Fort is where the twin Bunkers are located. They are two massive, windowless, fortified bunkers made of M.D.C. steel and concrete. Concealed security cameras (barely noticeable even if one knows where to look) transmit images and sound of what is transpiring within 100 feet (30.5 m) around the bunkers. Large to massive blast doors (200 M.D.C. each) open on the three sides that extend out from the wall. The bunkers house 60% of the fort's Skelebots (that's a total of 2664; 1332 per each bunker), along with 2-4 CTX-50 "Line Backer" Heavy Tanks or CTX-52 "Sky Sweepers." The doors outside and inside the fort walls are designed to let the Skelebots swarm out quickly to address any threat or to quickly surround "visitors" at the main gate.

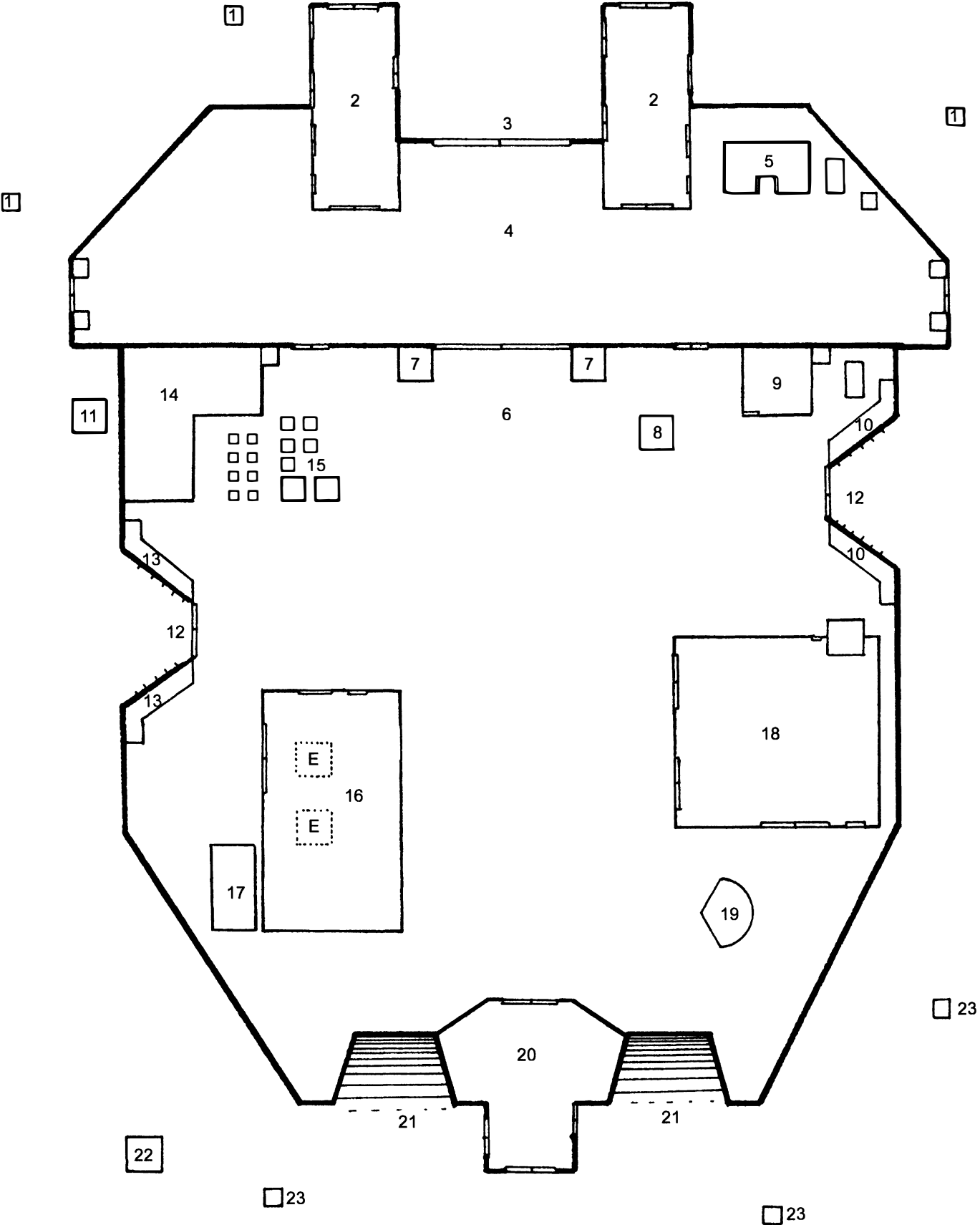
3. The Main Entrance. Massive M.D.C. blast door serve as the front gate. The doors open outward and have 300 M.D.C. each. Special tactical explosives can be detonated by the Fort Commander to "blow" the hinges and locks to enable those *inside* to push the doors down, if necessary (usually by having tanks or 'bots knock them down and roll right over them and the scores of invaders who may be crushed underneath them).

4. The Courtyard. This is an enclosed inner area where the CS can meet with, address and, when appropriate, feed and house its freelance agents, i.e. mercenaries, spies, informants, travellers and other non-CS Military personnel.

Ninety-eight percent of all structures in this area are S.D.C. constructs and within easy firing range of *all* inner Tower and Wall Sentries. Each door in or out, other than the main entrance, has one or two Sentry Towers. Furthermore, the Skelebot Bunkers also have three large doors that open into the Courtyard, enabling the robots to address any treachery or riots from freelance mercenaries or enemies who breach the front gates or walls. A pair of Sentry Towers and smaller (40 foot/12.2 m wide) doors are located at the far ends of the courtyard near the edge of the inner wall.

5. Agents' Office. This is were the CS Liaison Officers meet with the "outside help" to hand out assignments, debrief informants and scouts, accept prisoners and distribute pay, re-

Fort Barron Surface Level



wards and favors. Outside help refers, of course, to mercenaries, bounty hunters, Psi-Stalker scouts and so on. This is also where any "trade" with the locals (typically food supplies) takes place. **Note:** A number of CS Psi-Stalkers and Dog Boys (with their ability to sense the supernatural and magic) are assigned to duty in the Courtyard and Agents' Office.

6. The Inner Entrance Gate & The Alley. The inner gate is identical to the main gate described under #3.

The Alley is what the troops call the wide, open center of the fort. In addition to being an open traffic way for heavy vehicles, bots and VTOL aircraft, it is used as a track for exercise, running, parades, etc.

7. Main Wall Sentries (2). Fundamentally the same as the Sentry Towers (see #1) but with a larger crew (14), twice the number of rail gun and laser turrets, 32 Skelebots and two SAMAS power armor and pilots for quick response and additional support. It also has a jail area that can hold up to 30 prisoners (50 cramped) and a landing pad on the roof for flying power armor and small VTOL aircraft. 140 feet (42.7 m) to either side of the Main Wall Sentries is a smaller gate (40 feet/12.2 m wide; 200 M.D.C.) and a standard Sentry Tower (same as #1).

8. Recreation Hall. A one story, light M.D.C. building (500 M.D.C.) where soldiers can come and relax, shoot some pool, shoot darts, play cards and buy snacks or food.

9. Prison. A large prison for troublesome, drunken and AWOL soldiers (all a rarity at Fort Barron), as well as for captured enemies and suspects. Includes eight interrogation rooms, two line-up viewing rooms, staff area and enough cells to accommodate 160 prisoners (twice that cramped). Typically staffed by 12 Military Specialists, six Intelligence officers, 24 grunts and 24 Skelebots. More can be assigned as is deemed necessary. Only light weapons and armor are used by the staff and no weapons are stored here.

10. Main Side Entrance Weapon Battery. Better known as the Gauntlet. Enemies who attack this heavy gate (400 M.D.C.) will be fired upon from a battery of lasers coming from both sides of the slanted walls. All lasers are strategically placed as to not blast each other in a cross-fire, and have a 45 degree arc of fire, up and down, and side to side. A light salvo does 1D4x10, medium salvo 2D4x10 and a full salvo 3D6x10 M.D. Against human-sized raiders, 1D4x10+30% of all attackers will get hit and suffer 4D6 M.D. four times per melee round, while such in this cross-fire. Larger targets take 1D6x10 M.D. each, four times per round.

11. Sentry Checkpoint. This a small, fortified bunker (800 M.D.C.) in which soldiers and visitors to the fort stop to be identified and checked out by security. Visitors will be held at the Checkpoint or sent to the main entrance. The one story Checkpoint has a waiting area, small jail area (can accommodate 20 prisoners comfortably), garage, storage and staff area. It is typically staffed by 8-12 Dog Boys, 8-12 grunts, 2-4 CS Psi-Stalkers, 2-4 Officers and 12 Skelebots. 2-3 Hover Platforms, 3-6 hover cycles and two jeeps are typically kept in the garage.

12. Main Side Entrance. The sloping walls are heavy M.D.C. fortification (100 M.D.C. per 20 square feet/1.8 m) and lead to a pair of large, 80 foot (24.4 m) wide and 20 foot (6 m) tall doors (400 M.D.C.).

13. Main Side Entrance/Exit Weapon Battery. Same as #10.

14. Base Facilities. PX, Mess Hall, Meeting Hall, Game Room and miscellaneous offices.

15. Outdoor Housing & Base Facilities. Each building typically has about 100 M.D.C.

16. Armored Vehicle Hangar. Includes two large, 40x40 foot (12x12 m) lift elevators for the underground level, plus contains a small mechanics/repair shop (for basic, easy jobs and minor repairs), 2D4 "Sky Sweepers," 1D4 "Linebacker" tanks, and a dozen or so light trucks and transports. The building has 1100 M.D.C. and has a crew of 30-90 depending on the situation, plus 32 Skelebot guardians.

17. Heavy Missile Launching Bunker (1). Systems Command includes a staff of 20.

- **Medium-Range Missiles (Standard Load):** 10 fragmentation (2D6x10 M.D.), 10 heavy high explosive (3D6x10 M.D.), 10 plasma (4D6x10 M.D.) and two Multi-Warhead Smart Bombs (5D6x10 M.D. and +5 to strike). Average Range: 40 miles (64.3 km); Smart Bombs 80 miles (128.7 km). Rate of Fire: One at a time or in volleys of 2, 4, or 6. Automatic, automated reload system takes four melee rounds (60 seconds). Payload: 32. As many as 32 additional missiles are stored safely underground.
- **Short-Range Missiles (Standard Load):** 6 fragmentation (2D4x10 M.D.), 6 medium high explosive (2D6x10 M.D.), 6 Tear Gas and 6 smoke. Average Range: 5 miles (8 km). Rate of Fire: One at a time or in volleys of 2, 4, or 6. Automatic, automated reload system takes four melee rounds (60 seconds). Payload: 24. As many as 48 additional missiles are stored safely underground.

18. Large Aircraft Hangar. Includes two large 40x40 foot (12x12 m) lift elevators and four small (40x20 foot/12x6 m) elevators to the underground aircraft hangar. Plus it contains a small mechanics/repair shop (for basic, easy jobs and minor repairs), 1D4+10 CS Rocket Cycles, 1D4 Skull Patrol Cars and 1D4 Wind Jammer Sky Cycles. The building has 2000 M.D.C. and has a crew of 60-120 depending on the situation, plus 48 Skelebot guardians.

19. Baseball Diamond & Open Field. Baseball is a favorite sport of the Coalition States and a great way for troops to exercise. The surrounding area is a grass field suitable for other sports and drills.

20. Rear Entrance/Exit. Designed for easy movement of mass troops and the exit of large vehicles. 400 Skelebots stand on both sides of the main aisle (800 total). Doors have 500 M.D.C., while the walls in this bunker have 140 M.D.C. per 20 square feet (1.8 sq. m).

21. Bunker Vehicle Exit. This sloping incline leads to massive blast doors (600 M.D.C. each) to the Armored Combat Vehicles kept on the lower level. The bunker-style walls and slope have 200 M.D.C. per 20 square feet (1.8 sq. m). The 80 foot (24.4 m) wide doors open to unleash tanks, APCs and other ground vehicles on one side and squads of small, fast aircraft and power armor on the other, as well as troops. Additional Power Armor and vehicles use the elevators in buildings #7, 14, 16, and 18.

22. Sentry Checkpoint. Same as #11.

23. Three Sentry Towers. Same as #1.

Underground Level

Note: The ceiling height of the front, main section with the garages, hangars and storage bays is 35 feet (10.7 m) with corridors wide enough for robots and armored vehicles to travel in rows of 2-6 depending on their size; corridor width ranges from 60-100 feet (18.3 to 40.5 m) wide.

1. Battle Deck. This is a huge open area where the main troops, armored vehicles, power armor, 'bots and aircraft gather to exit the fort. Ground Vehicles typically from the exit ramp nearest them and elevators in room #9 (leads to surface building #16), aircraft and power armor from the exit ramp nearest them and elevators in room #11 (leads to surface hangar #18). **Note:** 100 Skelebots line the walls directly across from the exit ramps and 12-24 guard each of the hangars, vehicle bays, garages and storage areas. They immediately attack anybody not wearing a CS uniform or Dead Boy armor.

2a. Ground Vehicle Bay: 12 "Slayer" APCs and 10-16 miscellaneous light trucks.

2b. Aircraft Hangar. Mainly small vehicles like the CS Rocket Cycles. There is also a secret door connecting 2b and 2c.

2c. Aircraft Hangar. Mainly Wind Jammer Sky Cycles, Warbirds and other hover/rocket cycles. Occasionally a dozen power armor.

3. Tank & Armored Vehicle Bay. Contains the majority of the CTX-50 "Line Backer" and CTX-52 "Sky Sweeper" battle tanks, 4-6 Mark IX EPC and 10-20 other light combat vehicles.

4. Missile Storage Bay.

5. Robot Hangar. Contains the majority of the combat robots and 1D6 Sky Sweepers.

6. Access Tunnel.

7. Tank and Robot Garage.

8. Secondary Vehicle Garage.

9. Access way to Main Hall & Elevators. These large lift elevators go up to #16 on the surface. In the far corner there is a secret door to Battle Deck #1.

10. Main Tank and Robot Garage.

11. Service Area and Elevators. This is a light mechanics facility where weapons, electronics and other equipment can be worked on, and E-Clips recharged (actually all Garages can charge E-Clips). It also has two large and four (comparatively) small lift elevators to carry aircraft, vehicles and troops to the surface inside hangar #18.

12. Small Aircraft & Power Armor Garage.

13. Small Aircraft & Power Armor Garage.

14. Power Armor Storage Bay.

15. Power Armor Storage Bay.

16. Dog Boy Living Quarters.

17. Dog Boy Living Quarters.

18. Psi-Stalker Living Quarters.

19. On-Duty, Flight Crew Living Quarters.

20. On-Duty, Flight Crew Living Quarters.

21. On-Duty, Flight Crew Living Quarters.

22. Storage.

23a. Service Crew Living Quarters.

23b. Service Crew Living Quarters.

24. Parts Storage.

25. Access way to Elevators. Elevators go to building #14 on the surface. There are also two 20x20 foot (6x6 m) secret storage bays containing weapons, explosives and electronics.

26. Service Crew Living Quarters.

27. Recreation Room, Lounge and Snack Bar.

28. Access Corridor leading to Main Living Area.

29. Elevator Room. Goes to building #14 on the surface.

30. Dividing Hall to the Main Housing of CS Troops. There are two large, main entrances in the middle and two concealed, secret doors at either end.

31. Weapons Storage.

32. Eight Conference Rooms. Reserved for Officers.

33. Officers' Lounge.

34. Two Large Conference/Meeting Rooms. Reserved for Officers.

35. Command Center! Two stories, with a main floor and a second upstairs War Room and conference areas.

36. Water System.

37. Communications Center.

38. Storage. Includes 144 Skelebots.

39. Large Conference Rooms. Two stories

40. Officers' Cafeteria & Lounge. With wet bar.

41. Power Armor Storage. Typically reserved for Officers.

42. Officers' Living Quarters. Private apartments; 3 stories.

43. Officers' Living Quarters. Private apartments; 3 stories.

44. Movie Theater. Four different theaters.

45. Restaurant.

46. Tavern and Lounge. Open to soldiers.

47. Elevator. Goes to Skelebot Bunker #2.

48. Power Armor Pilot Living Quarters. Three stories.

49. Power Plant.

50. Mess Hall.

51. Soldiers' Living Quarters. Three stories.

52. Kitchen Storage.

53. Administration Offices. Two Stories.

54. Soldiers' Living Quarters. Three Stories.

55. Lounge.

56. Recreation Room.

57. Access Corridor.

58. Mall-Style PX. With several different stores, tiny restaurants, and things to do.

59. Soldiers' Living Quarters.

60. Life Support.

61. Hospital. Three Stories.

62. Isolation Laboratories.

63. Laboratories.

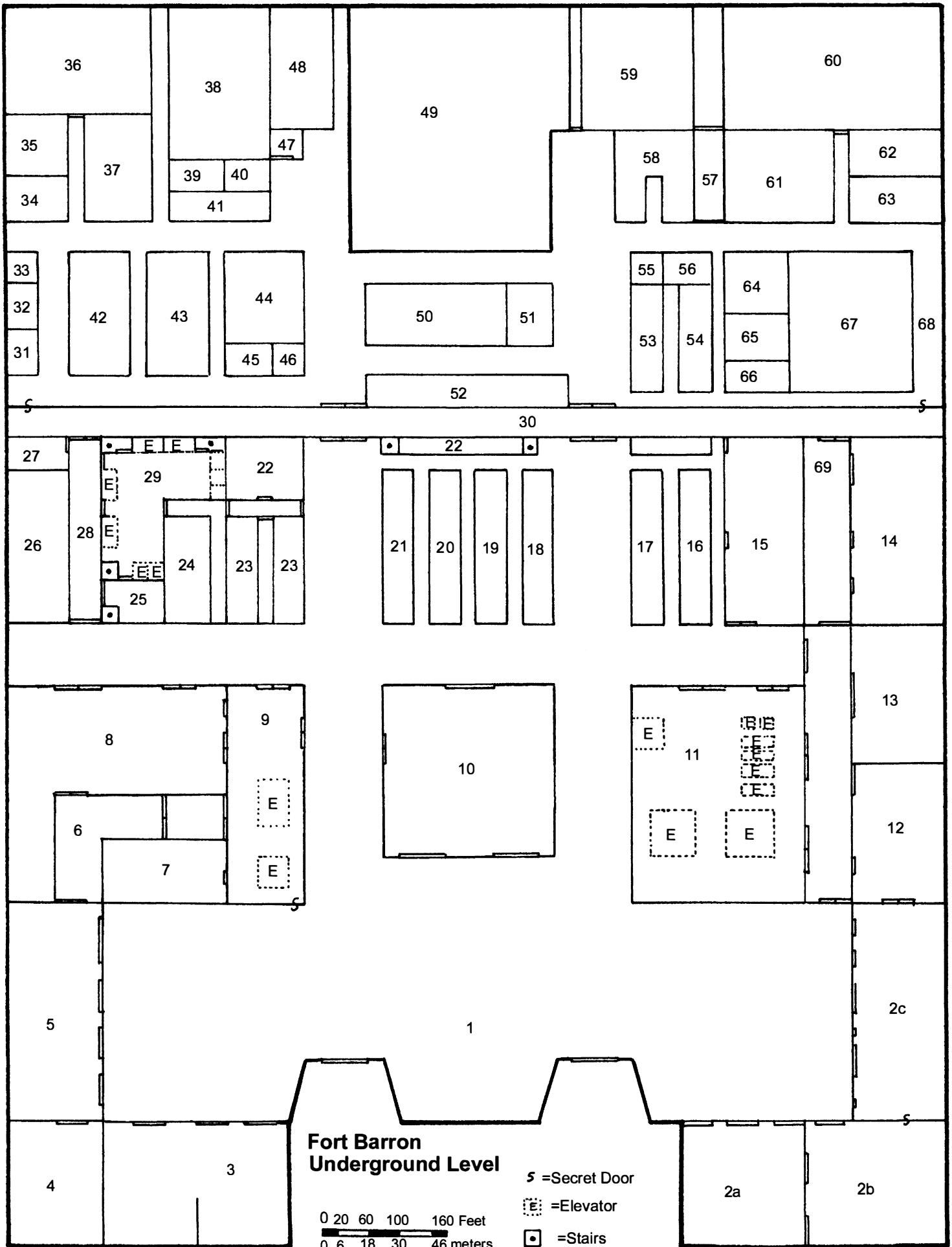
64. Mess Hall. Open 24 hours.

65. Storage.

66. Recreation Room.

67. Gymnasium with Full-Sized Swimming Pool.

68. Secret Door.



Fort Perrion

Troop Breakdown at Fort Perrion

Army Brigade/1920 troops (Human):

- 1% RCSG
- 2% CS Psi-Stalkers
- 2% EOD Specialists
- 3% CS Cyborg Strike Troopers
- 3% CS Juicers
- 5% CS Technical Officers
- 5% CS Military Specialists
- 5% CS Rangers
- 7% RPA "Fly Boy" Aces
- 10% CS Commandos
- 12% RPA Elite/SAMAS Pilots
- 15% CS Nautical Specialists (5% CS Naval Infantry, 5% CS Sailors, 3% Nautical Commandos and 2% Navy Sea Dogs)
- 15% CS Special Forces
- 15% Grunts/Soldiers

Additional Troops (nonhuman):

- One Brigade of Skelebots (1920)
- One Company of Dog Boys (160)
- No hired, freelance Wilderness Scouts and Agents, this is a closely guarded, covert military operation. CS Military Personnel only.

Notable Weapons & Vehicles Consignment:

All the latest body armor and weapons.

Combat Ground Vehicles:

- 10 CTX-52 "Sky Sweeper" Hover Tanks
- 4 Mark VII "Slayer" APCs

Combat Robots:

- 2 CR-005 Scorpion-Skull Walkers
- 12 CR-004 Scout Spider Walkers
- 24 IAR-4 Hellraisers
- 36 IAR-5 Hellfire (Scout & Light Assault)

Air Combat Vehicles:

- 4 Demon Locust Assault Helicopters
- 8 CS Wind Jammer Sky Cycles
- 48 CS Warbird Rocket Cycles
- 48 CS Scout Rocket Cycles

Water Combat Vehicles:

- 48 CSN Sea SAMAS
- 24 Trident Power Armor
- 6 CSN Sea-Spider Walkers
- 36 Robot Shark Sleds
- 24 Jet Skis
- 2 CSN Mark IV Hurricane (submersible Patrol Boats)
- 2 Stingray Mini-Subs

Power Armor:

- 96 Special Forces "Striker" SAMAS
- 72 Super SAMAS
- 72 "Smiling Jack" SAMAS
- 12 Glitter Boy Killers
- 12 Maulers
- 24 Terror Troopers

Skelebots (1920)

1320 Old Style Skelebots

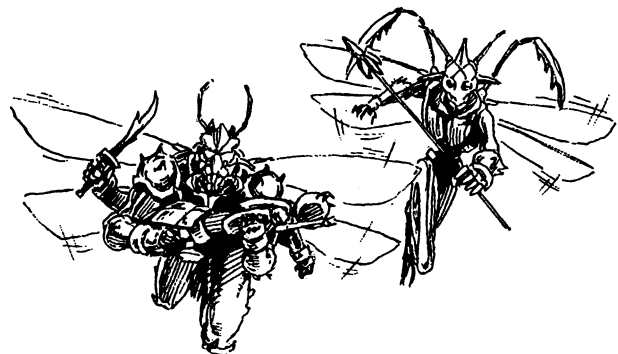
600 New Style Skelebots

Fort Perrion is tiny compared to Fort Barron. It has the same basic shape and layout except it is only a third the size, has half the Sentry Towers and only one ramp exit from the lower level (the underground complex is also a third the size). In many ways it is really more like a fortified outpost than a true base or fort. In addition it is heavily automated with half its "troops" being Skelebots. It is located roughly 60 miles (96 km) to the northeast of Fort Barron (near where the pre-Rifts city of **Ashland** once stood) and off the southwestern coast of Lake Superior.

Fort Perrion serves as the base camp for Special Forces intended specifically for aggressive combat operations, guerilla warfare and covert operations 100 or more miles (160 km) away from its location. A Company from Psi-Battalion and three companies of Special Forces operate from here, as well as Commandos, Rangers, RPA Elite and other specialized CS Military forces. The amount of human troops at the fort is minimal, with most Special Ops out in the field. This means most combat vehicles are small, light, fast and maneuverable to get in and get out.

The Grunts, half the Nautical Specialists and the majority of the Technical Officers maintain the base, while the combat elite engage in field operations to undermine, sabotage and destroy the enemy. These forces ambush, snipe and eradicate Xiticix patrols, hunting parties and lone Xiticix, conduct hit and run raids on the Xiticix towers and Hive Network, as well as engage in acts of sabotage, creating diversions, and rescue and support of larger operations. As a rule, these operatives engage in small squad guerilla tactics as small Strike Teams of seven to fourteen, unless undercover when the soldiers may act alone or in small groups of 3-5. Both Strike Teams and undercover agents may be gone months at a time, although some sort of regular means of communication is usually required to keep Command in the loop. Undercover operatives (as well as many Strike Teams and Special Ops units) are disguised as freelance mercenaries, woodsmen, local hunters and adventurers. Thus, one or more CS agents *may* secretly be part of any group of Lazlo Xiticix Fighters, perhaps even the player group! At least 50-60% are assigned to missions in Canada at any given time. The rest can be found anywhere the Xiticix are found or they are needed, primarily in western Ontario, southern Manitoba, Minnesota, Wisconsin, northern Wisconsin, northern Michigan, and, to a much lesser degree, the Dakotas.

Note: There is a secret underground tunnel that leads from Fort Perrion to a tiny dock a mile (1.6 km) down the shore of Lake Superior for concealed exits and strategic maneuvers.



Heroes & Hardcases of the Xiticix Invasion

Although Lazlo and the legion of Wild Psi-Stalkers facing the Xiticix are the most noticeable components of this conflict, there are numerable other forces at work here. The Coalition in particular has a vested interest in stopping or containing the Xiticix menace, as do many independent adventurers who have seen the writing on the wall and know that if they don't do all they can to stop the creatures, then they might as well begin looking for another planet to move to.

Described below are a number of small, less conventional groups of soldiers who are fighting the war against the Xiticix in their own fashion, and by their own rules. While Lazlo and the Psi-Stalkers carry the weight of the conflict, there can be no doubt that "peripheral volunteers" such as the folks noted below are just as important a factor in keeping the Xiticix from over-running North America.

The groups mentioned in this section represent a cross-section of the kinds of crews working the Hivelands for fun and profit. This is by no means a comprehensive catalog of the "heroes and hardcases" in the area.

The Wild Pack

Two years ago, Commander Jess Helgeland, a Coalition Psi-Stalker noted for her ability to find and apprehend fugitives, was brought to Chi-Town to investigate the escape of a criminal D-Bee named **Grukka Sdetla**. Sdetla was originally accused of smuggling, but when he was brought in for processing, he went wild and killed two Dead Boy troopers before fleeing the city. Commander Helgeland was brought in to assemble a Dog Boy team and bring Sdetla to justice.

The D-Bee proved more resourceful than previously imagined, as he led Helgeland and her team on wild goose chases all throughout the 'Burbs, and up towards Tolkeen. Finally, Helgeland has closed in on her quarry, and chased him right into Xiticix territory. In the ensuing battle, Sdetla was killed by angry Xiticix, who then set upon Helgeland and her Dog Pack. The Coalition soldiers fought their way out of the Hivelands, but not before losing three Dog Boys to the aliens, a loss none of the survivors would ever really get over. With their mission accomplished, none of these team members wanted to go back. Instead, they have opted to stay out in the Hivelands, where they can get a little payback from the bugs, one piece at a time. The team has not reported Sdetla's death, so he is "officially" alive and the Wild Pack is hunting for him (while really on a Xiticix killing spree).

It has been over a year and a half since Helgeland and her Dog Boys set up shop near the Hivelands. Acting as a single fire-team, this incredibly tight-knit group avoids Xiticix patrols, strikes cautiously, and scavenges for food and supplies. They fear that if they go back to base camp, they'll be called out of the field.

Commander Jess Helgeland

Race: Human

Alignment: Principled

Attributes: I.Q.: 14, M.E.: 18, M.A.: 18, P.S.: 20, P.P.: 20, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 20, Spd: 32

Hit Points: 69; **S.D.C.:** 60.

Weight: 150 lbs (68.1 kg). **Height:** 5 feet, 11 inches (1.8 m)

Age: 30

P.P.E.: 12, **I.S.P.:** 178

Disposition: A bit grizzled and weary for her age, but tough as tungsten and as unyielding as iron. She has seen a lifetime's worth of hard service during her brief stay along the Hivelands, which has made her all the less suitable for reinsertion to "normal" civilized life. She, like her Dog Boys, has become so accustomed to living in constant danger that she can not "power down" out of her "crisis mode." If allowed to live in an environment of relative peace and quiet, she will go mad before too long. Thus, she is condemned to stay here, fighting the Coalition's war against the Xiticix despite insurmountable odds. Past her war-weary exterior, Commander Helgeland is a warm and caring person. Thanks to her grueling time out here, though, that side of her persona may never see the light of day again.

Experience Level: 10th level Coalition Psi-Stalker.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (+10%), Pilot Hovercraft (+10%), Robot Combat: Basic, Read Sensory Equipment (+10%), Weapon Systems (+10%), Body Building, Climbing (+15%), Running, Prowl (+10%), Boxing, Swimming, Wrestling, Navigation, First Aid, Basic Electronics, Computer Operation, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Heavy.

Special Abilities: Sense Psychic and Magic Energy, Sense Supernatural Beings, and Psionic Empathy with Animals.

Psionics: Astral Projection (8), Clairvoyance (4), Sense Evil (2), Telepathy (4), See Aura (6), and Object Read (6).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks Per Melee: Seven

Combat Bonuses: +2 to pull punch, +4 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +8 to parry, +8 to dodge, +5 to strike, +8 to damage, +3 to save vs magic & poison, +10% to save vs coma/death.

Other Combat Info: Kick: 1D6+8, Critical Strike: Natural 18-20, Paired Weapons (All), Body Throw/Flip: 1D6+8 plus victim loses one attack and initiative, Knockout/Stun: Natural 20, Body Block/Tackle: 1D4+8, Pin/Incapacitate: 18-20, Crush/Squeeze: 1D4+8.

Weapons of Note: CP-50 Dragonfire Assault Rifle & Grenade Launcher (2D6 M.D. per single shot; grenade launcher does 6D6 M.D. to a 12 foot/3.6 m diameter blast area), CP-30 Laser Pulse Pistol, Vibro-Saber (2D6 M.D.) and 10 long E-Clips, 9 standard E-Clips, 14 micro-fusion grenades in a crossover bandoleer.

Body Armor: CA-4 Standard “Dead Boy” Armor (100 M.D.C. main body).

Other Equipment: Standard starting equipment, along with a NGS2 Basic Survival Pack.

Sgt. Samuel (Dog Boy)

Race: Bloodhound

Alignment: Principled

Attributes: I.Q.: 15, M.E.: 15, M.A.: 15, P.S.: 20, P.P.: 25, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 15, Spd: 32

Hit Points: 44, S.D.C.: 50.

Weight: 170 lbs (77.2 kg); **Height:** 5 feet, 10 inches (1.78 m).

Age: 5

P.P.E.: 10, **I.S.P.:** 125.

Disposition: Quiet and thoughtful with a deep sense of contained intensity. He is silent killer, who has no remorse about his task at hand. This intensity translates into how he relates to his teammates as well, for of all the Dog Boys in the Wild Pack, Samuel is considered dependable and the most dedicated to helping others before helping himself. A true crusader.

Experience Level: 6th level Dog Boy.

Skills of Note: Intelligence (+10%), Radio: Basic (+10%), Radio: Scramblers, Pilot Jet Pack, Pilot Hovercraft (+10%), Read Sensory Equipment (+10%), Weapon Systems (+10%), Climbing (+10%), Running, Land Navigation (+10%), Wilderness Survival (+10%), Prowl, Detect Ambush, Intelligence, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Paired Weapons.

Special Abilities: Sense psychic and magical energy, sense supernatural beings, superior sense of smell, +12% to tracking by smell, keen hearing, Swim (45%).

Psionics: Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (3), Sixth Sense (2), Empathy (4), See Aura (6).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: Five

Combat Bonuses: +2 to initiative, +8 to strike, +9 to parry, +9 to dodge, +5 to damage, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, base save vs psionics: 10, +1 to save vs psionic attacks.

Other Combat Info: Bite: 1D6+5 S.D.C., Kick: 1D8+5 S.D.C., Jump Kick, Entangle, Critical Strike: Natural 18-20.

Weapons: CP-50 Dragonfire Assault Rifle & Grenade Launcher (2D6 M.D. per single shot; grenade launcher does 6D6 M.D. to a 12 foot/3.6 m diameter blast area), CP-30 Laser Pulse Pistol (2D4 M.D.) and a pair of Vibro-Swords (a long sword that does 3D6 M.D. and a short sword that does 2D6 M.D.).
Note: These blades are Samuel’s favored weapons, and he will always fight with them as a paired unit. On his own, in the dark, he is absolutely hell on wheels with these things, as many unsuspecting Xitix have learned the hard way.

Extra Ammo: 14 long E-Clips, 8 standard E-Clips, 19 micro-fusion grenades in a crossover bandoleer.

Body Armor: Standard CA-4 “Dead Boy” Armor (100 M.D.C. main body)

Other Equipment: Standard starting equipment, along with a NGS2 Basic Survival Pack.

Corp. Chase (Dog Boy)

Race: Boxer

Alignment: Unprincipled

Attributes: I.Q.: 15, M.E.: 13, M.A.: 15, P.S.: 25, P.P.: 20, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 15, Spd: 30

Hit Points: 50; S.D.C.: 44.

Weight: 200 lbs (91 kg); **Height:** 6 feet (1.83 m).

Age: 6

P.P.E.: 10, **I.S.P.:** 125.

Disposition: Despite his intensive training and behavioral conditioning, there still exists a bit of the wild side in Chase, which is probably why his alignment is Unprincipled rather than Scrupulous. He is prone to taking off by himself to fight the enemy, which sometimes requires his teammates to come in and bail him out of trouble. Chase is always ashamed when this happens, but it’s something he really can’t help. Hopefully, it won’t get him or his teammates killed someday.

Experience Level: 6th level Dog Boy.

Skills of Note: Intelligence (+10%), Radio: Basic (+10%), Radio: Scrambler, Pilot Jet Pack, Pilot Hovercraft (+10%), Read Sensory Equipment (+10%), Weapon Systems (+10%), Climbing (+10%), Running, Land Navigation (+10%), Wilderness Survival (+10%), Weapon Engineer, Mechanical Engineer, Robot Mechanics, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons

Special Abilities: Superior sense of smell, +4% to track by smell, keen hearing, leap 15 feet/4.6 m high on a quick running start.

Psionics: Sense Evil (2), Sense Magic (3), Sixth Sense (2), Empathy (4), Astral Projection (8).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: Five

Combat Bonuses: +2 to initiative, +6 to strike, +7 to parry, +7 to dodge, +10 to damage, +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, base save vs psionics: 10, +1 to save vs psionic attacks.

Other Combat Info: 2D4+10/3D6+10 S.D.C. from a bite, Kick: 1D8+10 S.D.C., Jump Kick, Entangle, Critical Strike: Natural 18-20.

Weapons of Note: CP-50 Dragonfire Assault Rifle & Grenade Launcher (2D6 M.D. per single shot; grenade launcher does 6D6 M.D. to a 12 foot/3.6 m diameter blast area), CP-30 Laser Pulse Pistol, Vibro-Saber (2D6 M.D.) and 14 long E-Clips, 20 standard E-Clips, 40 micro-fusion grenades in a crossover bandoleer and in two satchels.

Body Armor: Standard “Dog Boy” Armor (50 M.D.C., main body).

Other Equipment: Standard starting equipment, along with a NGS2 Basic Survival Pack.

Corp. Chesterfield (Dog Boy)

Race: Lakeland Terrier

Alignment: Principled

Attributes: I.Q.: 15, M.E.: 13, M.A.: 15, P.S.: 20, P.P.: 21, P.E.: 25, P.B.: 15, Spd: 36

Hit Points: 60, S.D.C.: 44.

Weight: 110 lbs (50 kg); **Height:** 4 feet, 6 inches (1.4 m).

Age: 6

P.P.E.: 10, **I.S.P.:** 125.

Disposition: While Chesterfield finds his work in the Wild Pack gratifying, he has grown weary of this constant fight against the seemingly endless Xiticix, and yearns for something more in life. He has a love of robotic vehicles and heavy weaponry, and dreams of leaving the Hivelands and striking out on his own as an adventurer. Still, living without the Wild Pack is an alien concept to him, since he was raised with his fellow soldiers as a pup. Chesterfield's conflicting desires will pull him apart unless he figures out what to do: stick around in a doomed but honorable theater of conflict, or follow his heart at the cost of abandoning his kin?

Experience Level: 6th level Dog Boy.

Skills of Note: Intelligence (+10%), Radio: Basic (+10%), Radio: Scramblers, Cryptography, Pilot Jet Pack, Pilot Hovercraft (+10%), Read Sensory Equipment (+10%), Weapon Systems (+10%), Climbing (+10%), Running, Land Navigation (+10%), Wilderness Survival (+10%), Pilot Robots and Power Armor, Navigation, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons

Special Abilities: Superior sense of smell, keen hearing, tough and aggressive, +2 to initiative, +1 to strike, +2D6 S.D.C., swim 40%

Psionics: Sense Evil(2), Sense Magic(3), Sixth Sense(2), Empathy(4), See the Invisible(4).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts

Attacks Per Melee: 5

Combat Bonuses: +3 to pull punch, +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to initiative, +6 to strike, +7 to parry, +7 to dodge, +5 to damage, base save vs psionics: 10, +1 to save vs psionics, +5 to save vs magic & poison, +20% to save vs coma/death.

Other Combat Info: Bite: 1D6+5, Kick: 1D8+5, Jump Kick, Entangle, Critical Strike: Natural 18-20.

Weapons of Note: C-27 "Light" Plasma Cannon: Mega-Damage: 6D6 per blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of attacks per melee round. Range: 1,600 feet (488 km). Payload: 10 shots per energy canister. Bonuses: +1 to strike.

Plus CP-50 Dragonfire Assault Rifle & Grenade Launcher (2D6 M.D. per single shot; grenade launcher does 6D6 M.D. to a 12 foot/3.6 m diameter blast area), a pair of Vibro-Claws (2D4 M.D.), a Xiticix resin dagger (1D4 M.D.) and six C-27 energy canisters, 8 long E-Clips, 8 standard E-Clips, 10 micro-fusion grenades in a large belt pouch.

Body Armor: Standard "Dog Boy" Armor (50 M.D.C., main body).

Other Equipment: Standard starting equipment.

Wild Pack Associates

A pair of Anarchist, 2nd level Psi-Stalkers from the Spider Tribe (basic equipment and standard abilities) and a feral (AWOL) Dog Boy who calls himself "Crunch" have recently joined the team. Crunch is a 5th level *Kill Hound* (Special Ops, see page 43 of *Rifts® Lone Star*) of Aberrant alignment and suffers from the Behavioral Problems of Ignore Pain and Sloth). All are loyal to the Pack.

Manitoba & Company

NPC Villains

This crew of miscreants are under semi-permanent employment by the Coalition. They are kept out on the fringes of Xiticix territory where they perform covert actions to harass the bugs. When not doing that, they often spy on those coming to and from Lazlo. Aside from that, they are free to do as they choose, which typically means robbing and terrorizing anybody who crosses their path. The group ranges from the southern Dakotas to Hudson Bay, earning a serious reputation as fearless bugkillers as well as the foulest of villains, best left alone by all but the hardest of champions. However, this mercenary team does not really get along that well (in large part because of their resident Gunfighter *Manitoba Saskatchewan*), and it would seem only a matter of time before they dissolve their union or begin killing each other. Then again, they've been together now for nearly four years. Currently, the group consists of **Manitoba Saskatchewan**, a Great Hunter Gunfighter, **Hidechek Gezenske**, a notorious Burster, **The Mighty Cassandra**, a Hyperion Juicer, and **Dekker Trons'tedaal**, an AWOL Coalition Military Specialist piloting a retrofitted suit of Mauler power armor.

The Mighty Cassandra

Race: Human

Alignment: Anarchist

Attributes: I.Q.: 9, M.E.: 8, M.A.: 8, P.S.: 25, P.P.: 25, P.E.: 30, P.B.: 20, Spd: 150 (approx. 103 mph/165 km)

Hit Points: 50, S.D.C.: 180.

Weight: 140 lbs (63.6 kg); **Height:** 5 feet, 6 inches (1.67 m).

Age: 19

Disposition: Hyper, self-absorbed, totally convinced of her own superiority. Hey, she's a Hyperion Juicer! She doesn't have to take your guff, anyway! She's got places to go, people to see, things to blow up ... Cassandra has been a Hyperion Juicer for a little over four years now, so she is quickly approaching the end of her rope. Within another 12 to 16 months, she can expect her Juicer augmentation to catch up with her at last. Until then, she intends to live life the Juicer way: living fast, fighting hard, dying young. Sad but true.

Experience Level: 6th level Hyperion Juicer.

Skills of Note: Acrobatics (+5%), Climbing (+5%), Gymnastics (+5%), Land Navigation (+15%), Radio: Basic (+10%), Wilderness Survival (+10%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Sword, W.P. Knife, Swimming, Prowl, First Aid, Pilot Jet Pack, Pilot Hover Craft, Pilot Tanks & APCs, Pilot Truck.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: Seven

Combat Bonuses: +6 to initiative, +9 to strike, +8 to parry, +9 to dodge, +4 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +4 to save vs psionics, +4 to save vs mind control, +9 to save vs disease, toxic gases and other poisons.

Other Combat Info: Kick: 3D6 S.D.C., Power Kick: 1D6 M.D.C. (counts as *two* attacks), Automatic Parry, Automatic Dodge.

Money: None! This gal spends it as fast as she earns it.

Weapons of Note:

WI-CL8 Multi-Purpose Weapon System: Mega-Damage: Chainsaw: 5D6, Laser: 3D6. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: Laser: 2,000 feet (610 m). Chainsaw: Hand to hand only. Payload: Requires two E-Clips. The laser has 20 shots. The second E-Clip powers the chainsaw for one hour of continuous use. Every time the chainsaw is activated, it drains a minimum of one minute's worth of energy, even if used for less than a minute. Penalty: -1 to strike due to its awkward balance. **Extra Ammo:** 12 extra E-Clips in web belt pouches.

Body Armor: Vibro-Spike Armor: 50 M.D.C., Mega-Damage: Slam: 2D6, Power Slam: 4D6 (counts as *two* attacks).

Other Equipment: Standard Hyperion Juicer starting equipment.



Hidechek Gezenske

Race: Human

Alignment: Anarchist

Attributes: I.Q.: 10, M.E.: 20, M.A.: 10, P.S.: 14, P.P.: 14, P.E.: 14, P.B.: 9, Spd: 13

Hit Points: 58, **S.D.C.:** 40.

Weight: 160 lbs (72.6 kg); **Height:** 6 feet (1.83 m).

Age: 36

P.P.E.: 10; **I.S.P.:** 250.

Disposition: Gezenske is self-important and annoying, all because he was the original leader of this particular crew.

Experience Level: 12th level Burster.

Skills of Note: Pilot Motorcycle (+10%), Pilot Tanks & APCs (+10%), Wilderness Survival, Body Building, Swimming, Climbing, Prowl, First Aid, Basic Mechanics, Basic Electronics, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle.

Psionics: Impervious to Fire and Heat, Extinguish Fires (4), Flame Burst(4), Fire Bolt(2 or 4), Fire Eruption, Sense Fire(2), Super Fuel Flame(8), Levitation, Resist Thirst(6), Resist Hunger(2).

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic

Attacks Per Melee: Six

Combat Bonuses: +4 to pull punch, +4 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +3 to parry, +3 to dodge, +2 to strike, +2 to damage.

Other Combat Info: Kick: 1D6 S.D.C., Fire Bolt: 2D6/4D6/6D6 M.D., Critical Strike: Natural 19-20, Body Throw/Flip: 1D6 plus victim loses one attack and initiative.

Money: About 5,000 credits worth of salable black market items, like contraband music, vintage whiskey, and a laser disc of Super Bowl #50. Also has about 1,000 credits in gold.

Weapons:

Naruni NE-4 Plasma Cartridge Pistol: Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 per shot. Rate of Fire: Equal to number of hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 500 feet (152 m). Payload: 10 round magazine. Note: Gezenske is at -2 to strike with this weapon because he simply is not strong enough to brace it properly during firing. Still, he loves this thing, and will not stop using it. (Where the heck did he score a Naruni gun anyway?)

Plus a Vibro Blade (3D6 M.D.) and three NE-4 magazines. Since Gezenske is running low, he will only go to his beloved plasma gun if he *really* thinks he will need it.

Body Armor: A patched up suit of Bushman armor with 52 M.D.C.

Other Equipment: Standard starting equipment for a Burster.

Manitoba Saskatchewan

Race: Groat Hunter

Alignment: Miscreant

Attributes: I.Q.: 6, M.E.: 8, M.A.: 7, P.S.: 35, P.P.: 15, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 3, Spd: 15 (45 when swimming)

M.D.C.: 196

Weight: 600 lbs (270 kg); **Height:** 8 feet (2.4 m).

Age: 25

P.P.E.: 3

Disposition: This misanthrope is a scourge of both Xiticix and non-Xiticix alike. As dim-witted as he is violent and temperamental, this Groat Hunter took his name from the regions he lived in and around during his life, not knowing how ridiculous it might make him seem, especially in the eyes of fellow evildoers. Over the years, Manitoba prowled the edge of the Hivelands, supposedly in search of a powerful artifact called the *Codex of Souls*, which is supposed to lie within Xiticix territory. It would seem that as he terrorizes travelers along the Hivelands border, he is merely working up the courage to go in himself to search for his precious Codex, whatever it may be. In the meantime, he has hooked up with a band of other lowlifes for the moment, hoping that together they might score a few juicy jobs and make some cash. Manitoba sure hopes so, because he really can not stand these humans, and just might twist off one of his companion's heads if they don't stop *annoying* him so damn much.

Experience Level: 9th level Gunfighter.



Skills of Note: Land Navigation (+10%), Detect Ambush (+15%), Detect Concealment (+10%), Find Contraband (+12%), Recognize Weapon Quality (+20%), Basic Electron-

ics (+10%), Armorer (+20%), Sniper, W.P. Revolver, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, W.P. Sword (+3 to strike, +3 to parry), Pilot:

Tanks & APCs, Horsemanship: Exotic, First Aid, Basic Mechanics, Locksmith, Escape Artist (+5%), Tracking (+5%), Interrogation (+5%), Climb, and Prowl.

Natural Abilities: Sharp vision, instinctive swimmer (98%), heal 3D6 M.D.C. every 12 hours.

Special Abilities: Weapons Master, Weapon Repairs, Paired Weapons: Pistols, W.P. Sharpshooting: Energy Pistol, Reputation/Horror Factor: 12.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert.

Attacks Per Melee: Five, +1 with guns and is a sharpshooter with pistols.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to disarm on a called shot, +5 to save vs Horror Factor, +1 to save vs magic, +1 to save vs possession, +3 to save vs poison, and +5 to save vs disease.

Other Combat Info: Bite: 1D6 M.D., Claws: 2D6 M.D.

Money: None. Although a formidable warrior, Manitoba is a loser when it comes to handling mullah. Either he splurges it, wastes it, or just plain loses it. He is destined to be poor forever because he lacks the brainpower to hold on to any money he makes. His low intelligence also makes it easy for others to swindle him out of his hard-earned cash.

Weapons of Note:

Wilk's 237 "Backup" (6): Mega-Damage: 3D6 per single blast or 6D6 per double blast. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 500 feet (152 m). Payload: 16 single pulse shots or 8 double pulse shots per standard E-Clip. Bonuses: +2 to strike. Note: Manitoba *never* uses the single-pulse option on his weapons. He will also shoot until his pistols run out, draw the next two and keep blazing until *they* run out, and then go to his last pair and fire away. Only when his third pair runs dry will he begin to think about reloading.

Wilk's-Remi 157 "Judgement Day": Mega-Damage: 3D6+2 per single shot, or 1D6x10 per three-shot burst. Rate of Fire: Equal to hand to hand attacks per melee round. Range: 1,800 feet (548.6 m). Payload: 30 single shots or 10 triple pulse shots per long E-Clip. Note: Manitoba generally uses this thing only for picking off targets at a distance. All things being equal, he would much rather close in on his opponents and whip out some of his "two-gun mojo" on them, as he likes to put it.

Extra Ammo: 18 standard E-Clips, and five long E-Clips, all chucked into a big satchel. During combat, Manitoba will sometimes grab the wrong E-Clip for the wrong weapon. Although this is no problem for his pistols, it is a hassle when he's trying to reload his rifle.

Body Armor: "What, are you kidding? That stuff's fer wimps and greenhorns. Manitoba Saskatchewan don't need no oyster shell on his chest to feel like a Slinger! What, you saying I ain't tough enough? Draw!"

Other Equipment: None, really. All Manitoba cares about is keeping his weaponry in good order. The other things he needs in life have a funny way of falling into his lap. Usually because he just shot the previous owner.

Dekker Trons'stedaal

Race: Human

Alignment: Miscreant

Attributes: I.Q.: 14, M.E.: 14, M.A.: 12, P.S.: 10, P.P.: 13, P.E.: 13, P.B.: 10, Spd: 20

Hit Points: 40, S.D.C.: 50.

Height: 5 feet, 10 inches (1.78 m); **Weight:** 160 lbs (72.6 kg).

Age: 22

Disposition: Dekker was part of a Coalition scouting unit sent to patrol a border of the Hivelands a few months back. When his unit was ambushed by Xiticix, he turned tail and left his fellow soldiers in the lurch. Without their Mauler's backup firepower, the small band was wiped out, leaving Dekker safely unscathed. He then wandered the plains looking for some kind of easy transport back to Chi-Town when he fell in with the band of roving marauders he travels with now. Seriously AWOL, Dekker doesn't mind the independent life, and he will probably never go back home, especially since a hefty bounty has been placed on his head for deserting with a rather expensive piece of Coalition hardware.

Experience Level: 4th level CS Elite RPA (Robot & Power Armor) Pilot.

Skills of Note: Radio: Basic (+10%), Radio: Scrambler, Pilot Automobile (+10%), Pilot Hovercraft (+10%), Pilot Tank & APCs (+15%), Pilot Robots and Power Armor (+10%), Pilot Jet Packs (+10%), Navigation (+10%), Robot Combat: Elite, Read Sensory Equipment (+15%), Weapon Systems (+15%), Running, Climbing, Body Building & Weight Lifting, Boxing, Wrestling, Wilderness Survival, W.P.: Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Expert, Power Armor Elite Combat Training.

Attacks Per Melee: Six (8 in his power armor).

Combat Bonuses: +3 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +5 to parry, +5 to dodge, +2 to strike.

Power Armor Combat Bonuses (in addition to normal combat bonuses): +2 attacks per melee, +2 to strike, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge on ground, +5 to dodge while flying (if applicable), +3 to roll with punch, fall or impact, critical strike, punch: 1D6 M.D. kick: 1D6 M.D., leap kick: 2D6 M.D. (counts as *two* attacks), body flip/throw: 1D4 M.D., body block/tackle: 1D6 M.D. (counts as *two* attacks).

Weapons of Note: CP-40 Pulse Laser Rifle (2D6 M.D. per single blast or 6D6 per triple blast), C-20 Laser Pistol (2D6 M.D.), a survival knife (1D6 S.D.C.), and 16 long E-Clips.

Body Armor: Standard CA-4 "Dead Boy" Armor (100 M.D.C., main body). This is in addition to the Mauler Power Armor with about half its M.D.C. left.

Mauler Power Armor; Quick Stats

Crew: One

M.D.C. by Location:

* Hands (2) — 25 each

Arms (2) — 100 each

Legs (2) — 150 each

Plasma Shoulder Guns (2) — 65 each

Concealed Mini-Missile Launcher (1; back) — 50

Concealed Forearm Blasters (2) — 50 each

Retractable Vibro-Sabers (2) — 50 each

Rear Jet Thruster (1) — 50

Shoulder Thruster Units (2) — 30 each

* Maneuvering Jets (8) — 15 each

* Mini-Lights (6) — 1 each

** Head — 90

*** Main Body — 280

* A single asterisk indicates a small and difficult target to strike, requiring the attacker to make a "called shot," but

even then the attacker is -4 to strike.

****** Destroying the head of the power armor will eliminate all forms of optical enhancement and sensory systems. The pilot must rely on his own human vision and senses. All power armor bonuses to strike, parry and dodge are lost. The head is a small and difficult target to hit, tucked into the chest between two heavily plated shoulders. Only a called shot at -4 will hit it directly.

******* Depleting the M.D.C. of the main body shuts the armor down completely, rendering it useless.

Speed: Running: 40 mph/64 kph. Leaping: 15 feet (4.6 m). Underwater: 15 mph (24 km).

Statistical Data: Height: 8 feet (2.4 m). Width: 4.5 feet (1.4 m). Length: 4 feet (1.2 m). Weight: 1,800 lbs (810 kg). Physical Strength: Equal to a P.S. of 36. Cargo Capacity: None. Power System: Nuclear with an average life span of 20 years.

Weapons:

Shoulder Plasma Ejectors (2): Mega-Damage: 4D6 per blast. Range: 1,200 feet (365.7 m). Rate of Fire: Each can be fired twice per melee round. Payload: Effectively unlimited.

Concealed Back-Mounted Mini-Missile Launcher (1): Mega-Damage: 1D4x10 (fragmentation). Range: One mile (1.6 km). Rate of Fire: Single shot or in volleys of two or three. Payload: Eight.

Forearm Lasers (2): Mega-Damage: 2D6 per blast. Range: 1,200 feet (366 m). Rate of Fire: Equal to the pilot's combined number of hand to hand attacks per melee round. Payload: Effectively unlimited; tied to the armor's power supply.

Retractable Forearm Vibro-Sabers (2): 2D4 M.D.; +1 to strike and parry.

Hand to Hand Combat: The pilot can engage in Mega-Damage hand to hand combat, but the best the Mauler can perform at is at Basic Power Armor Combat Training. Refer to page 45 of the **Rifts® RPG**.

The Lazlo Triad

This group of hardy crusaders comes fresh from Lazlo, determined to eradicate the growing threat the Xiticix horde presents not only to Lazlo, but to all of North America. The group consists of three core members — the Fire Dragon Hatchling, **Serian Skeld**, the Cyber-Knight, **Sir Jericho Camlann**, and the Line Walker, **Omicron**. They are the joint leaders of the group, which often consists of various junior adventurers brought on as apprentices and to lend the group added firepower, skills, abilities, and problem-solving potential. Currently, the group has three associates, two 3rd level Headhunters, a 4th level Wilderness Scout, and a 2nd level Techno-Wizard. And finally, the group has also taken on **Marina Gruder**, a 5th level Psi-Stalker who is acting as the expedition's guide and scout.

Serian Skeld

Race: Fire Dragon Hatchling

Alignment: Unprincipled

Attributes: I.Q.: 22, M.E.: 19, M.A.: 23, P.S.: 26, P.P.: 19, P.E.: 22, P.B.: 24, Spd: 21

M.D.C.: 400

Weight: 25 tons **Size:** 20 to 30 feet (6-9 m) tall, up to 65 feet (20 m) long, with a wingspan of 100 feet (30.5 m).

Age: One year, three months.

P.P.E.: 80, **I.S.P.:** 60.

Disposition: Cocky and impulsive! This should come as no surprise, since this champion is still fresh from the egg, so to speak. Although Serian possesses a good heart and might one day become a powerful champion for good, she will remain something of a liability until then. Right now, she has been partnered with Sir Jericho Camlann so he can provide the Hatchling with the moral compass she needs so very badly. Most of the time, Serian poses as a simple human traveler so that locals are not alarmed by her appearance. At the first sign of trouble, however, the Hatchling will spring forth from her disguise, without thinking if and how her sudden appearance as a dragon just *might* disrupt things.

Experience Level: 5th level Fire Dragon Hatchling.

Skills of Note: Basic & Advanced Math (98%), Demon and Monster Lore (90%), Faerie Lore (40%), Basic Electronics (92%), Computer Operation (92%), Climbing, Swimming, Art, Writing, Sing, Dance, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle, W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons, Pilot Hover Craft.

Horror Factor: 12

Magic: Blinding Flash (1), Cloud of Smoke (2), Latern Light (1), Cleanse (6), Throwing Stones (5), Fuel Flame (5), Fool's Gold (10), Armor of Ithan (10), Invisibility: Simple (6), Carpet of Adhesion (10), Ley Line Transmission (30), Tongues (12), Domination (10), and Eyes of Thoth (8).

Special Abilities: Fly 50 mph (80 km), Nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), see the invisible, impervious to fire, bio-regenerate 1D4x10 M.D. every five minutes, metamorphosis, and teleport: 36%.

Psionics: Astral Projection (8), See Aura (6), Telekinesis (varies), Mind Block (4), Healing Touch (10), Presence Sense (4)

Combat Training: Equal to Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks Per Melee: Six hand to hand or two via spell magic.

Combat Bonuses: +3 to strike, +3 to parry and dodge, +13 to damage, +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to save vs psionic attack, +4 to save vs magic, +4 to save vs poison and disease, 70% to charm and impress, 75% to evoke trust.

Other Combat Info: Fire breath: 6D6 M.D., P.S. is considered Supernatural Strength for punching, clawing and kicking damage. Critical Strike: Natural 19-20.

Money: Not to much yet, but only because Sir Jericho keeps convincing her to donate it to the city of Lazlo. The Hatchling has finally decided enough is enough, and has begun amassing a personal treasure currently worth about 20,000 credits.

Weapons: None.

Body Armor: None.

Other Equipment: None, other than the gear she keeps to maintain the ruse of a simple human traveler.

Sir Jericho Camlann

Race: Human

Alignment: Scrupulous

Attributes: I.Q.: 15, M.E.: 18, M.A.: 20, P.S.: 22, P.P.: 22, P.E.: 20, P.B.: 15, Spd: 23

Hit Points: 65, **S.D.C.:** 110

Weight: 200 lbs (90 kg), **Height:** 5 feet, 11 inches (1.8 m)

Age: 31

P.P.E.: 30, **I.S.P.:** 72.

Disposition: Noble and true, Sir Jericho is the moral compass for his stalwart group of adventurers. He speaks little, but when he does, it is usually to point out something important or revealing. Yet he always does so in a way that makes even the most impenetrable mysteries seem as simple as tying one's shoe.

Experience Level: 9th level Cyber-Knight.

Skills of Note: Literacy (+20%), Lore: Demon (+20%), Anthropology (+15%), Paramedic (+10%), Land Navigation (+12%), Horsemanship (+15%), Climbing (+10%), Body Building, Gymnastics (+5%), Swimming (+10%), Acrobatics (+5%), Play Musical Instrument (+5%), Dance (+5%), Wilderness Survival (+5%), Hunting (+5%), Identify Plants & Fruits (+5%), Preserve Food (+5%), Skin & Prepare Animal Hides (+5%), Track Animals (+5%), Lore: Faerie (+5%), Boxing, Wrestling, W.P. Sword (+3 to strike and parry), W.P. Knife (+2 to strike, +3 to parry, +2 to throw), Tracking (+5%), W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Energy Rifle.

Special Abilities: Psi-Sword: 4D6 M.D.

Psionics: Summon Inner Strength, Sixth Sense, and Sense Evil.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Martial Arts.

Attacks Per Melee: Eight.

Combat Bonuses: +1 to initiative, +6 to strike, +9 to parry, +9 to dodge, +7 to damage, +3 to pull punch, +9 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to save vs psychic attack and insanity, +3 to save vs poison and magic, and +10% to save vs coma/death.

Other Combat Info: Karate Kick: 1D8, Jump Kick, Entangle, Critical Strike: Natural 18-20, W.P. Paired Weapons (All), Leap Attack (Critical Strike), Pin/Incapacitate: 18-20, Crush/Squeeze: 1D4+ 7.

Money: Sir Jericho keeps only what few credits he needs to sustain himself while questing. All other booty from his adventures goes straight toward worthy purposes. Mostly, he funnels it directly to the Lazlo city government, to be used in city defense, and alms for the poor.

Weapons of Note: NG-P7 Particle Beam Rifle (1D4x10 M.D. per blast, Range: 1,200 feet/365 m), a pair of NG-57 Heavy-Duty Ion Blasters (2D4 or 3D6 M.D., Range: 500 feet/152 m), and 10 E-clips for each.

However, his favorite weapon is a silver Holy Sword (perhaps a rune sword, he doesn't know) that does 4D6 M.D. per strike, appears to be indestructible and magically flies into his hand when he needs it (up to one mile/1.6 km range).

Cyber-Armor: A.R.: 16, M.D.C.: 50 with a suit of Crusader Armor (55 M.D.C.) worn over that.

Other Equipment: Standard gear for a Cyber-Knight. In addition, Sir Jericho has collected a number of daggers throughout his travels that he keeps bundled up in a cloth. Nobody knows for sure why he collects these, or what they signify, but they have all belonged to foes he has vanquished. One was owned by the nefarious Shifter Deraalzebun and another by an anonymous Mystic Knight Jericho vanquished in single combat.

Omicron

Race: Human

Alignment: Principled

Hit Points: 29, **S.D.C.:** 18

Weight: 140 lbs (63.6 kg), **Height:** 6 feet, 1 inch (1.85 m).

Age: 23

P.P.E.: 115

Attributes: I.Q.: 15, M.E.: 20, M.A.: 9, P.S.: 12, P.P.: 13, P.E.: 10, P.B.: 13, Spd: 16

Disposition: Geeky and erudite, Omicron fits the very stereotype of both a computer nerd and a reclusive wizard. His people skills are not so hot, but even that does not disguise the fact that he has a heart of gold and is indeed a noble crusader for goodness and light. His devotion to containing and/or destroying the Xiticix is beyond question, and he is very, very interested in locating some kind of magical knowledge or item that might help send these "locusts," as he calls them, to some other world where they will bother nobody.

Experience Level: 5th level Ley Line Walker.

Skills of Note: Climbing (+5%), Land Navigation (+4%), Wilderness Survival (+5%), Pilot Hover Craft (+5%), Lore: Demon (+10%), Math: Basic (+10%), Radio: Basic (+10%), Intelligence (+5%), First Aid (+5%), Paramedic (+5%), Art, Writing, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Sword, W.P. Knife.

Magic: Blinding Flash (1), Cloud of Smoke (2), Death Trance (1), Globe of Daylight (2), Befuddle (3), Chameleon (6), Climb (3), Concealment (6), Armor of Ithan (10), Breathe Without Air (5), Energy Bolt (5), Fingers of Wind (5), Astral Projection (10), Carpet of Adhesion (10), Blind (6), Charismatic Aura (10) and Circle of Flame (10).

Special Abilities: Sense Ley Lines and Magic Energy, Read Ley Lines, Ley Line Transmission, Ley Line Phasing, Line Drifting, Ley Line Rejuvenation, Ley Line Observation Ball.

Combat Training: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks Per Melee: Five hand to hand or two via magic.

Combat Bonuses: +2 to pull punch, +2 to roll with punch/fall/impact, +2 to parry, +2 to dodge, +1 to strike, +3 to save vs psychic attack & insanity.

Other Combat Info: Kick: 1D6

Money: Roughly 5,000 credits on him, with a large stash of money back in Lazlo. Sir Jericho keeps suggesting he give it away to a worthy cause, and at long last, it appears as if Omicron is beginning to actually consider the notion.

Weapons of Note: Wilk's 320 Laser Pistol (1D6 M.D.; Range: 1,000 feet/305 m).

Body Armor: The Gladiator: 70 M.D.C. This armor really is a little heavier than Omicron is comfortable with, but he really would rather have the extra protection than the extra speed or mobility. As it is, this suit of armor cuts his Speed down by half.

Other Equipment: Standard Ley Line Walker equipment, except for a book Omicron picked up a while ago. The thing is sealed with a magically charged locking mechanism that he simply can not figure out. The entire book is made of heavy metal, including the pages, which appear to be plates of pure brass. Whatever this book contains, Omicron sure hopes it is worth it; carrying it around with him all this time has been very tiring, since it weighs in at nearly 50 lbs (22.7 kg)!



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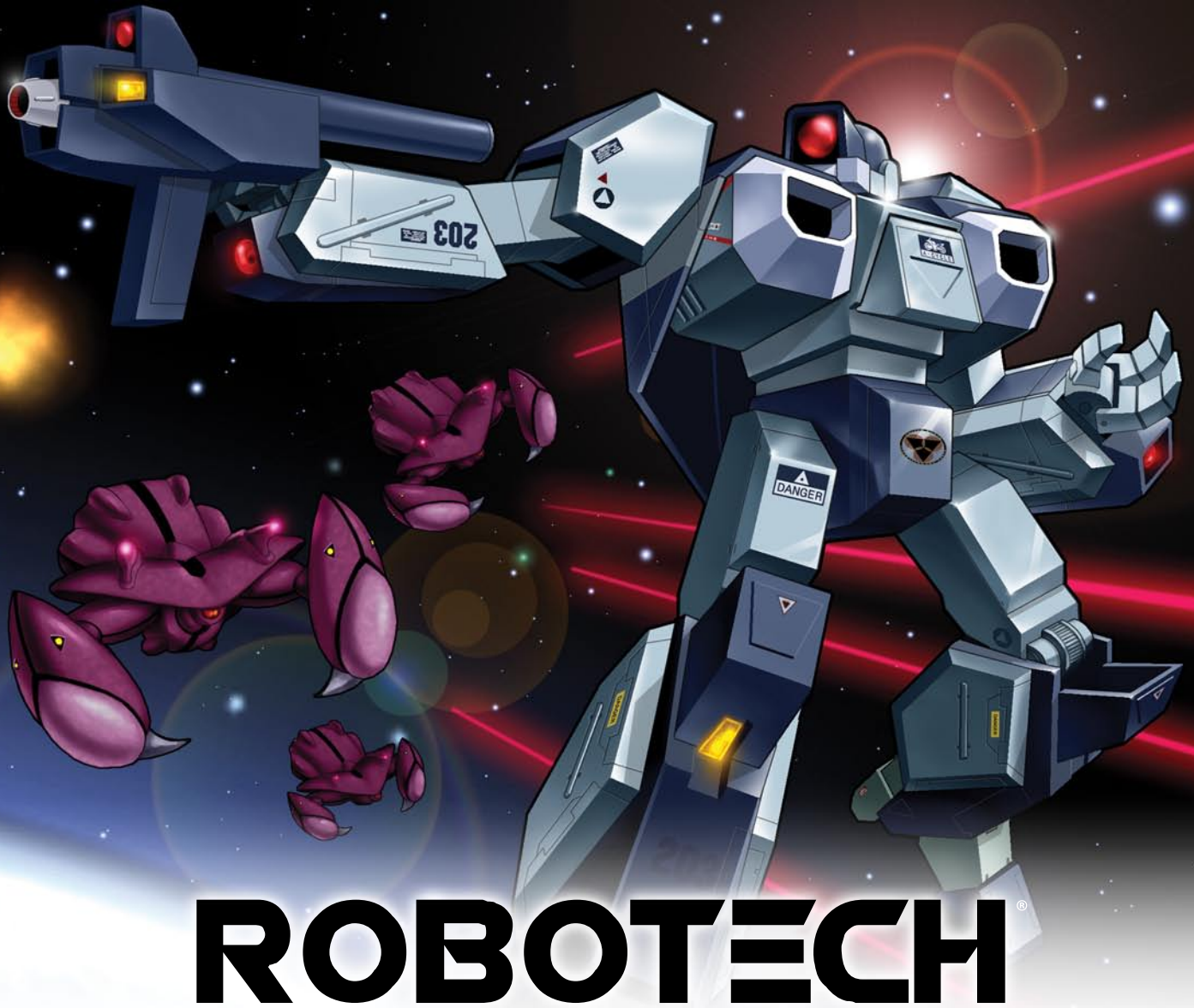
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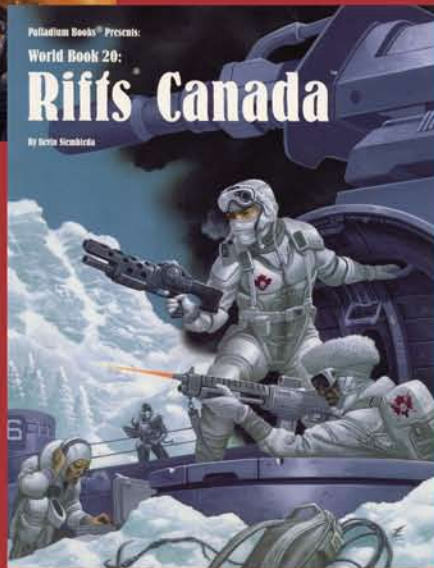
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